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February 1995
Number 50

FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

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Emil L. Fackenheim

What Happened at Cairo
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Iris Murdoch's G(o)od
Alan Jacobs

The Marriage of Your Choice
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The School Prayer Amendment Debate
The Editors

Opinions and Reviews: Paul T. McCain on Penalizing Wrong Ideas
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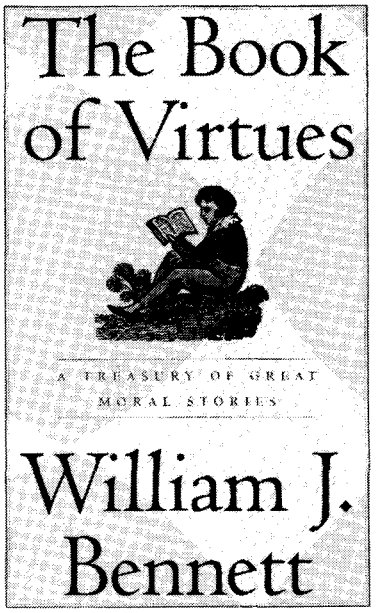

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

FEBRUARY 1995 / Number 50

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Editor: *James Nuechterlein*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Berke*
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More on Marital Power

Upon reading Mona Scheuermann's "Letter to a Colleague" (November 1994) concerning "power relations" in marriage, I was reminded of the time a young woman from a "Human Relations" class at our local university came to interview my husband and me. She was doing research for a class assignment and had been given a questionnaire that purportedly would measure where the power lay in our marriage. We had agreed to this moderate invasion of our privacy because she was a friend of a friend and seemed a most sincere and earnest young woman. I was also not a little curious as to what kind of scientific measuring device her professor had concocted. The questions turned out to be quite predictable. Three examples will suffice:

Q: When you are traveling together in the car, who drives?
A: Husband.
Q: Who pays the bills and takes care of the checking account?
A: Husband.
Q: Who cooks dinner?
A: Wife.

As our interviewer read off her questions and recorded our answers, it was transparently obvious that I was steadily sinking in her estimation. I was revealing myself to be just one more downtrodden housewife oppressed by her domineering husband. She seemed disappointed, as if she had expected something better from me and I had let her down. As she was putting her notebook away I asked if she would like an explanation for any of our answers. As hope returned, she eagerly answered, "Oh, yes."

My husband drives on our trips together, I explained, for three reasons: (a) I often have a briefcase full of work to do; (b) if I don't have work, I want the time for prayer, writing, or just enjoying the scenery; and (c) driving has a highly sedative effect on me and if I drive more than thirty minutes I am likely to fall asleep. I also observed that driving, far from being an exercise of power, might well be seen as servitude. People with money often hire chauffeurs. No one ever considers the chauffeur to be in a position of power.

My husband pays the bills, I continued, because after doing it many years myself, I asked him to on the grounds that it would give him a better understanding of our finances and would relieve me of an unpleasant task. Furthermore, I own and operate my own business and have quite enough bills to pay at my office. As in the case of chauffeurs, people with money usually hire accountants and secretaries to do such tasks for them, so it would seem to be service rather than power.

Concerning cooking, my husband usually has his main meal with colleagues at the university at noon and I often have lunch meetings, eat with friends, or with my employees at work. In the evening a light meal suffices, and when we want a large meal we usually eat out. My cooking is hardly a burden, and certainly more than a trade-off for my husband's shoveling snow, mowing grass, maintaining the furnace, plumbing, and general upkeep on an older home, which I didn't recall her asking about.

At the end of our conversation our student interviewer had mixed reactions. She was relieved that I had not "let her down" after all, but now she didn't know what to do with her "research" instrument, which had proven so unreliable.

If I had answered her questions during one of the years of our marriage when I was a full-time homemaker and mother of small children, she would most certainly have concluded that my husband had all the "power" in our marriage, yet that would have been as faulty a conclusion as her questionnaire yielded today. The problem, however, is much deeper than devising measuring instruments.

When the young woman asked Professor Scheuermann whether it isn't "absolutely necessary that before people marry they settle the power is-

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sues in their marriage," she should have been asked what kind of marriage she had in mind. Whether or not power is a valid issue in a secular marriage is a subject for another article, but I protest that it is most assuredly *not* a valid issue in a Christian marriage. What, after all, is the basis of a Christian marriage? Is it not a sacred covenant, entered into by a man and woman who believe they are called by God to live their lives together, faithfully following Jesus Christ in a life of service to one another, their children, and the larger community?

The commitment to service annihilates the attempt to obtain and exercise power over others. The example of Jesus Christ is total self-sacrifice. It is no accident that the cross is the central symbol for Christians, and it would certainly be appropriate for wedding rings to bear this image. I know a woman whose husband has Alzheimer's disease. She cares for him with loving patience and constancy such as she used with their small children many years ago. I know a man whose wife has an incurable debilitating disease. He bathes her, dresses her, and feeds her. He lovingly tries to understand her sadly garbled attempts to speak.

Where does the concept of power come into these marriages? The healthy spouses are obviously making all the decisions. Are they therefore powerful? Or might we consider that the helpless spouses are exercising power because they are commanding constant service?

Feminists in academe, feminist syndicated columnists, and talk show hosts on TV have been highly effective in promoting the practice of analyzing all human relationships in terms of power, oblivious to the distortions that ensue. Concomitant with this is the unexamined assumption that power per se is desirable. The tragedy is that so many Christians are docilely accepting this.

We need to hear again the shocking, revolutionary command of Jesus, "Those who would be greatest among you must be the servants of all."

M. T. Anderson
St. Cloud, Minnesota

C. S. Lewis Today

Much of Alan Jacobs' article, "The Second Coming of C. S. Lewis" (November 1994) is unexceptionable: no one could duplicate exactly C. S. Lewis' unique contributions and we ought not waste energy looking for a second Lewis. One throwaway line and one major point, however, should not go unchallenged.

First, the throwaway line: Jacobs says that Lewis' argument in *Mere Christianity* that any mere man who said what Jesus said would either be a madman or the Devil holds only if we agree in advance that the Gospels "provide an accurate account of what Jesus said." Contra Jacobs, this undeniable fact does not undercut the force of Lewis' argument (which is not unique to him). Lewis was refuting those who relativize Christ by calling him a "Great Teacher." But they are as dependent on the trustworthiness of the Gospels as are those who believe he was God incarnate. If the Gospels are not a trustworthy account of Jesus' teachings, the "Great Teacher" interpretation is meaningless—at best it was the early Church that was the "great teacher."

Although it is unwise to search for a *Lewis redivivus*, I do not think we should concede the field to the nihilist and deconstructionist infiltration of popular culture by trying to fashion an apologetic that would speak its language. One cannot communicate with those who deny the possibility of rational communica-

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tion, even if they playfully deny that denial. We need to do precisely what Lewis did—insist on the orderedness of reality and employ both faith and reason in speaking to our world. I suggest that Peter Kreeft's work, for example, does this in an admirable way that is comparable to Lewis' apologetic writings, although Kreeft does not have Lewis' skill in writing fiction, nor is he a scholar of medieval literature.

Then, of course, there is that remarkable man named Karol Wojtyla, who has just published what will probably be a bestseller even by popular media standards. He has written fiction, although nothing comparable to the space trilogy or Narnia chronicles. Like Lewis, however, he thinks we need both reason and faith, that the best way to respond to moral and intellectual disintegration is to call its bluff.

People may say they don't believe in absolute truth, but just ask them if they have ever shouted, "That's unfair!" (*Mere Christianity*, I.1 ff.)

Dennis D. Martin
Loyola University
Chicago, IL

Merely reading the title of Alan Jacobs' slightly cranky essay on C. S. Lewis worship set my pulse racing. Surprisingly, despite my status as one of those apparently somewhat befuddled American devotees to super-Brit, super-Christian Lewis, I found myself giving Jacobs two cheers by the time I had slugged down his carefully spooned-out remedy for the apologetics doldrums. Two cheers seemed ample considering my membership in the C. S. Lewis Foundation headquartered in Redlands, California. . . .

Jacobs hints strongly that Christians are foolhardy to continue with what he calls their "continued fascination with Lewis." To this myopic viewpoint I reply that to abandon Lewis is tantamount to throwing away the flashlight when you are lost in the desert at midnight. Rather Christians should study Lewis' remarkable versatility and persistence and model their behavior on his, engaging others by lovingly illuminating the black holes in modern logic and lives.

Jacobs is right when he says the likelihood of finding another blazing star like Lewis is extremely slim, but the cumulative radiance of a critical mass of articulate Christians banding together under Lewis' tutelage may be just what our fractured world needs.

I found it amusingly ironic that the very next essay in the issue lauds ideas of C. S. Lewis not once, but twice, the latter of which (a passage from Lewis' criticism of *King Lear*), writer Gilbert Meilaender claims undergirds his title, "On Bringing One's Life to a Point." Precisely.

Virginia Starrett
Orange, CA

"The Second Coming of C. S. Lewis" offends me deeply, chiefly because the article has nothing whatever to say. Its putative point, that we must not wait idly for another C. S. Lewis, is beside the point: Lewis has not left as long as his books remain in print, nor have the self-promoting relativists produced knowledge that requires new apologetics.

The article is offensive, too, in its cavalier dismissal of A. N. Wilson, whose defection to the Devil's party grieved booklovers mightily. Wilson seemed for a time to be the best Christian satirist of contemporary morals since Walker Percy, the only one in fact. *Christianity Today* was indeed publishing news, sad news, when it reported that Wilson had repudiated Christianity. . . .

Eloise K. Goreau
Princeton, NJ

Alan Jacobs replies:

Dennis D. Martin is right to point out the inconsistency of those who find authentic only those sayings of Jesus which comport with what they want to believe. I was merely noting that such people (e.g., members of the Jesus Seminar) will not be moved by Lewis' famous declamation about the great choice Jesus confronts us with. However, I thank Mr. Martin for emphasizing, as I did not, who is fundamentally in error on this point.

I am sorry that I gave Virginia Starrett the impression that I think lovers of Lewis "befuddled" and "foolhardy," and that I want us to "abandon" Lewis' works. I can only point out that I *said* nothing of the kind, and that the ambivalence of my last paragraph is genuine, not a mask for derision.

Given that Eloise K. Goreau is "deeply offended" by my having "nothing whatever to say," I can only wonder what response I would have elicited by saying *something*.

Ms. Goreau and Mr. Martin both claim that we Christians need not adapt our apologetics to "self-promoting relativists" who "deny the possibility of rational communication." Some day, indeed, we may have to shake the dust off our feet as we leave that house, but are we sure that day has come? It would be absurd to speak the language of nihilism in order to reach the nihilists; but we *should* seek, like St. Paul and with precisely the same constraints, to be all things to all men. That the overtly Christian writings of Lewis, and of his more thoughtful successors (like the estimable Peter Kreeft), are read almost exclusively by Christians strongly suggests that the message is not getting to the people who need it most, and while it may be more convenient to blame that situation on those nasty old closed-minded relativists, I think it is wiser (for reasons both practical and spiritual) to take the blame upon ourselves and to keep working to address unbelief in any and all of its forms. Those who fail to respond to the writings of C. S. Lewis are not ipso facto unreachable.

Who's Afraid of the Religious Right?

If he approached the matter seriously, I doubt David R. Carlin would find amusement in the alarm of so many over the growth of the Religious Right ("Right Thinking About the Religious Right," November 1994). True, most of its supporters are traditionalists reacting to the excesses of the sixties and seventies. They're upset over the social ills of disintegrating families, drugs, crime, teen pregnancies, and the fashionable nineties agendas of gay marriages,

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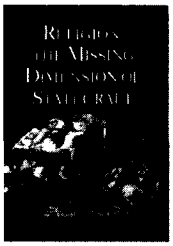

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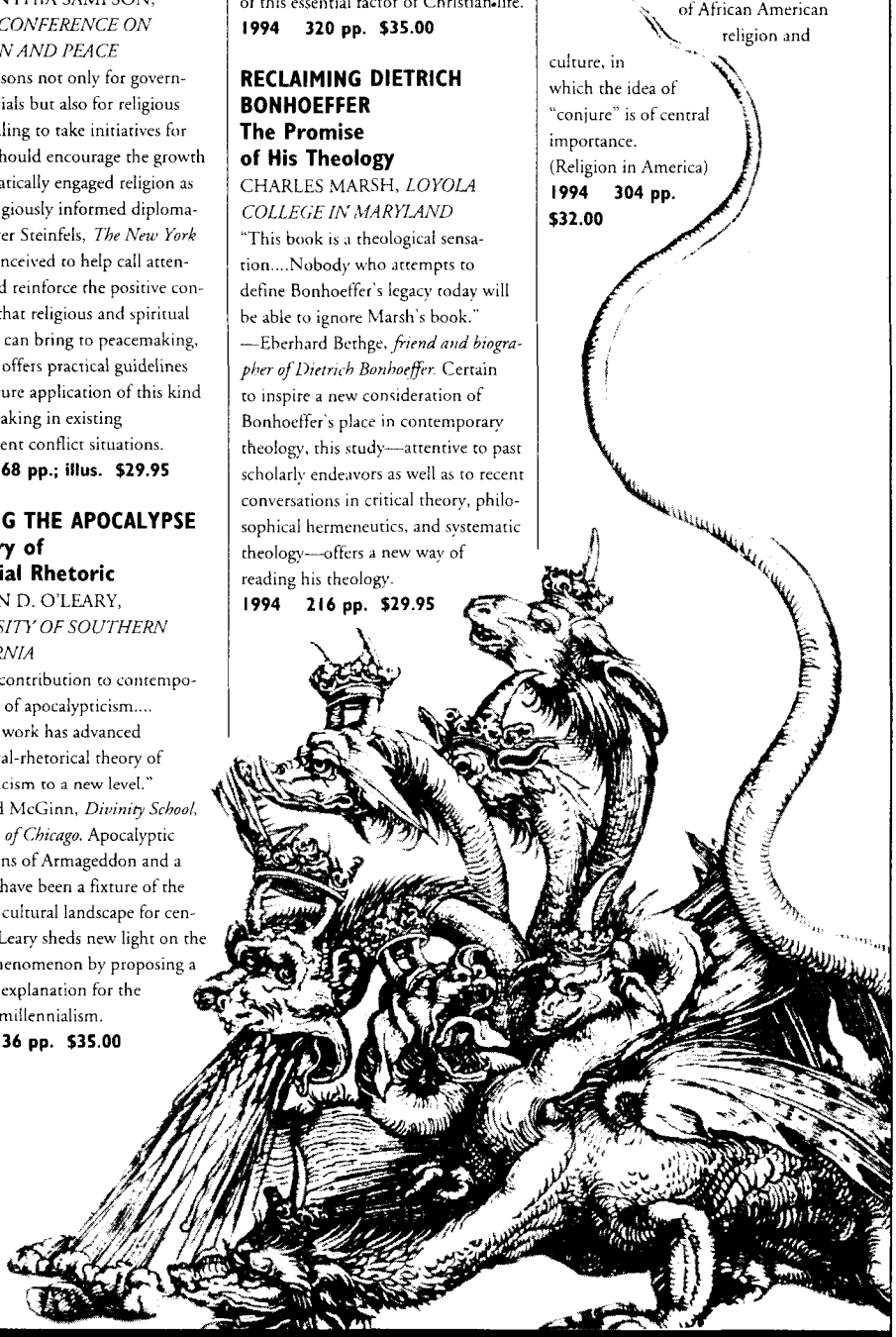

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abortion rights, euthanasia, and condoms in school.

However, these social agendas are public for all to see. (I approve of none, incidentally, and many other "right thinkers," to use Carlin's term, don't either.) On the other hand, the core agenda of many leaders of the Religious Right is well camouflaged beneath layers of conservative sloganeering. Joining in this "confuse the enemy" shell game, intellectuals like Carlin refuse to dignify the hidden agenda hypothesis with so much as a passing reference, never mind refuting it. Rather, he digresses to the fifties crusade against subversives by Joe McCarthy, dead now for nearly four decades. Meanwhile, today's subversives, the Christian Reconstructionists, are very much alive and working today to replace democracy with the new Puritanism. . . .

While many of their fellow travelers would deny it, I strongly suspect that the long-term goals of the Reconstruction movement provide the fuel that energizes the Religious Right's takeover of school boards and city councils and its attempts to gain control of political parties at the state level.

Some FIRST THINGS scholar could research an article assuring us that Reconstructionism threatens neither Protestant nor Catholic—no matter that its theologians regard dispensationalists and Catholics alike as apostates and, under theonomic law, would lump the lot of them in the criminal class without citizenship or attendant rights.

A. J. L'Hoste
Grand Prairie, TX

David R. Carlin is correct in addressing a wrongheaded secularist mentality that attempts to deny conservative Christians their legitimate right to participate in the American political dialogue. Hypocrisy often underpins the ideology which declares that only the foundations of a thoroughly secularist agenda can bind together a nation of citizens with varying philosophical and religious views. Also, while the rhetoric describing a war for the culture is indeed unsettling, the late John Courtney Murray's argument that we must acknowledge and embrace certain consensus truths cannot be avoided.

Nonetheless, we should not conveniently overlook the outright viciousness and divisiveness of certain high profile Christian leaders and their followers. The sound of silence from Carlin and others has been deafening. One does not have to be a rabid secularist to declare the radical religious right as out of the mainstream, a danger to the Republican Party, and most definitely at least a minor menace to the commonweal. Too many of these people indulge in angry, mindless, and ruthless populist rage. They refuse to concede that toleration is not merely an option for the American vision, but a mandatory necessity. Their near abandonment of faith in our political system has unnerving Jacobian undertones. This should not be surprising, for utopian yearnings inevitably lead to frustration and those so inclined ultimately perceive all disputes as leading to Armageddon. . . .

David Thomson
Houston, TX

David R. Carlin replies:

May I respectfully suggest that A.J. L'Hoste and David Thomson reread my article, which was not meant either to praise or to blame the Religious Right. It was meant instead to suggest that anyone who wants to find fault with the Religious Right (as L'Hoste and Thomson want to do) should begin by finding fault with the Cultural Left, whose never-ending provocations have caused the emergence of the Religious Right. No doubt there are those among the Religious Right who go off the deep end—a fact I have no wish to deny. But that wasn't the subject of my article.

Correction:

I write to correct an injustice I committed (unintentionally) against my friend and colleague, Hillel Fradkin, in my essay, "Educating Father Abraham: The Meaning of Wife" (November 1994). I ungenerously referred to his work only in passing and only to expose a difference we have long had about the role that Abraham's love for the beautiful Sarah plays in his education. I should have pointed out the vastly more important fact that Fradkin has for many years been writing and speaking about "the education of Abraham," read against the background of the earlier chapters in Genesis, based upon his own meticulous and thoughtful interpretations of the Genesis narrative. Readers of FIRST THINGS should know his fine essay, "God's Politics: Lessons from the Beginning," published in *This World* (Winter 1983); I regularly assign it in my course on Genesis. His beautiful recent essay on love in the Hebrew Bible will appear in a forthcoming volume, *Reflections on Love and Friendship*, edited by Stephen Gregory and Nathan Tarcov.

Leon R. Kass
University of Chicago

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FIRST THINGS
FEBRUARY 1995

The Debate About a School Prayer Amendment Is Not About School Prayer

Among all the other things that seem to have changed "all of a sudden" as a consequence of last November 8, the question of school prayer has been moved from one of the storage rooms way beyond the wings to somewhere prominently on stage, if not front stage and center. The most important thing about the discussion of a school prayer amendment is not school prayer as such. People of eminently good sense and religious conviction can disagree about whether there should be prayer in public schools and, if so, what kind of prayer and who should be in charge of it. Those decisions should be made by thousands of communities and local school boards across the country. That is called democracy. An amendment is needed not to mandate or even to encourage school prayer but to restore to the people their right and responsibility to deliberate and decide a question that bears upon the kind of education they want for their children.

Parents who are serious about the moral and religious formation of their children should have no illusions that adding a prayer at the beginning of the school day will achieve that goal. Public policy should help such parents send their children to schools that share their educational goals. This means school vouchers, education tax credits, flexible charter schools, or other instruments that can enable parents to exercise real choice in education. That, however, does not obviate the need for a school prayer amendment, which might better be called an educational democracy amendment.

Quite apart from the merits or demerits of prayer in public schools, an amendment is needed for three reasons. First, it is a necessary check upon the overreach of the imperial judiciary. The school prayer decisions of the early 1960s were a particularly blatant instance of judicial activism. The Constitution neither mandates nor prohibits prayer in the schools. What the Constitution says about school prayer is absolutely nothing. For almost two centuries nobody thought that school prayer was a constitutional question. It was up to local communities and their school boards. (Some scholars claim that a fairly small percentage of public schools actually had such prayer.) That is the way it should be again. Those who claim that the American people are not capable of deciding the question in a civil and mutually respectful manner reveal an unseemly contempt for the democratic process. Our point, however, is that what the Constitution does not say is unconstitutional is not unconstitutional. The Constitution does not say that prayer in the public schools is unconstitutional, therefore it is not unconstitutional. One may argue that school prayer is unfair, divisive, mischievous, or just plain dumb. But it is not unconstitutional, and apparently it will take an amendment to make that clear.

The second reason for an amendment is that it will challenge the judicial advancement of the pernicious ideology of the naked public square, of American public life denuded of religion and religiously grounded values. Whatever else one may think of the school prayer decisions of the 1960s, they sent a powerful message that ours is a secular society, and that a secular society is one in which religion must be expunged from any sphere that is designated as "public." Combine that with the notion that "public" is a synonym for "governmental" and the conclusion is inescapable that religion must retreat wherever government advances—and government advances almost everywhere. This has been the unhappy pattern of more than thirty years. An amendment can check that pattern and perhaps, in due course, reverse it.

The third reason for an amendment, closely con-

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nected to the first two, is that the incoherence of church-state jurisprudence over the last three decades is tied up with the school prayer decisions. Many, if not most, of the justices of the Supreme Court in the last decade have at one time or another publicly admitted that the Court has gotten itself into a brier patch of confusion and self-contradiction when it comes to the religion clause of the First Amendment. In our view, the Court's decisions have created a situation in which the "no establishment" provision of the religion clause has increasingly undercut the "free exercise" provision, even though the free exercise of religion is manifestly the purpose of the religion clause. Former Chief Justice Warren Burger has observed that the Court has in recent decades turned the religion clause on its head, and he is right. The proposed constitutional amendment could be a help in turning the religion clause right side up.

Voluntary school prayer is not a constitutionally forbidden "establishment" of religion, unless one believes that government policies that favor religion constitute an establishment of religion. Regrettably, the Supreme Court has at times indicated that it believes just that. The Court has said that, between religion and irreligion, the state must be neutral. Sometimes it has gone further, suggesting that religion, unlike irreligion, poses a threat to society and deserves, at most, legal protection as an individual choice or private eccentricity. That was not the view of those who wrote and ratified the Constitution, and it is not the view of the overwhelming majority of Americans today. It is the Court that has promulgated an eccentric view of religion, and it is the Constitution that provides the means for preventing the Court from imposing that view on the society, namely, a constitutional amendment.

There are at present several versions of a proposed amendment, and it is not clear which will be favored by the congressional majority. The best wording for the amendment will be the wording that best addresses the three concerns noted above. After an amendment is passed and ratified by the states, then the debate about the rightness or wrongness, the prudence or mischief, of school prayer can begin in earnest. Those who want that debate now, whether they are pro or con school prayer, are entirely premature. Having the debate now assumes that this is a question for the federal government to decide. It is not. The debate about the school prayer amendment, then, is not about school prayer. It is about returning to the people a right and responsibility that was arrogantly usurped by an imperial judiciary. It is about the restoration of democratic self-governance.

—The Editors

Sarai

Genesis 12:7-9

It feels like going mad, this following —
The voice from the starry night, the tent pegs pulled,
Camels tracking through a dusty haze,
The dawn on unknown dunes—the hollowing
Out of normal, ordinary days,
Like meal poured from a sack, till now we hold
Only the echoes of a voice. He told
Us, Go until you reach the promised place,
And Abram went. We've all gone, echoing
Each camp with the next one in the maze.
I watch him through the doorway, hallowing
the dusk with dreams, maddeningly bold.

Abram builds his altars, feels the stone;
But I am left in half-staked tents, alone.

Heidi Rolland

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This Time

My Island Paradise

James Nuechterlein

Among my friends, especially the liberal ones, it is a matter of some curiosity that I, the least politically correct person imaginable, should live in a neighborhood that is a multiculturalist's dream.

To be precise, it's not a neighborhood, it's an island—Roosevelt Island. Two miles long and a few hundred yards wide, it sits in the middle of the East River between Manhattan and Queens, stretching north across from the UN building in midtown up to Gracie Mansion, the mayor's residence, in the upper 80s. It used to be called Welfare Island, and for a long time it was a dumping ground for every institution Manhattan didn't want and couldn't fob off on one of the other boroughs—prisons, smallpox and TB hospitals, an almshouse, a home for the insane, etc. By the mid-1960s, though, they had all fallen into disuse except for two long-term custodial hospitals at either end of the island.

It was then that someone got the idea of turning it into a residential community. But not just any kind of residential community. Those were the halcyon days of the Great Society and it was determined—in cooperation between the federal, state, and city governments—that Roosevelt Island would become a Model Community, a sort of updated version of Eleanor Roosevelt's New Deal Greenbelt communities, Brigadoon in the Big Apple. (They named the island for Franklin, however, not Eleanor; I pretend it's for Theodore.)

The first residents moved in in 1975, and a carefully selected group they were. The calibrations regarding race, ethnicity, religion, class, age, handicap—you name it—appear to have been most minutely drawn. It was and is *The Family of Man* [sic] come to life. Actually, there has been a bit of backsliding in recent years. The original apartment units were built by the government, and when public housing funds started to dry up, there weren't enough people on the island to sustain all the small merchants necessary to keep it economically self-contained. So in the 1980s the state of New York, which owns the island, gave a one-hundred-year lease to private builders to open a new apartment complex, Manhattan Park, north of the original development.

That's where I live, and it isn't quite so socially pristine as the original site. Four of our five buildings charge market value rents, whereas the earlier community had a higher percentage of subsidized units. But even Manhattan Park is remarkably cosmopolitan. One reason is that it contains a large number of UN delegates and their families, especially from the Third World. They obviously find the ambiance of the island attractive, and no wonder—it embodies the Gorgeous Mosaic that former mayor Dinkins so often invoked and that the city so seldom resembles.

It's also a remarkably nice place to live. (Even my wife, who hates New York with a passion it is impossible to overstate, says that if, God forbid, you have to live there, Roosevelt Island is the place.) You're (technically) in Manhattan, but decidedly not of it. The first step off the subway or aerial tram—the only bridge to the island is from Queens, not Manhattan—and the pace slows, the tensions ease. It's like living in the suburbs, except that the commute is a lot shorter and you can get back to the city in just a few minutes if you want to. Plus there's the magnificent view: my bedroom window commands a vast panorama of the Upper East Side, and I regularly compare my vista with that of people across from me who, in addition to paying substantially higher rents for comparable apartments, have nothing better to look at than our unprepossessing island or, behind it, the warehouses and oil storage tanks of Queens. (The moral danger in living on Roosevelt Island is a tendency to an insufferable smugness.)

Great efforts are made to maintain the island's small town atmosphere for its 8,000 residents. The lone street that meanders up the island is, of course, Main Street, and it's lined with kiosks carrying notices of community events and paved with the red Z-bricks that are today's version of cobblestones. There's lots of green space, a charming park (complete with picturesque lighthouse), playing fields of every variety, a new school, a biweekly newspaper, a landmark Episcopal chapel, now interdenominational (along with a Catholic parish and a Jewish congregation), and even an island bus—fare, ten cents—for rainy days or for those people who find a maximum fifteen-minute walk more than they're up to. The local merchants—there's basically one of everything on the island—also cultivate the small town mood, and few of them display the routine impersonal surliness that so often makes shopping elsewhere in the city such a dispiriting experience.

On top of all that, Roosevelt Island is two other things most of the rest of the city isn't: clean and safe. The cleanliness derives not only from civic-mindedness, but from a firm (and wise) prohibition against dogs. Unlike other New Yorkers, we islanders walk with a carefree step. That the walking is safe as well as doodoo-free truly sets us off. When I hear police sirens in the night, I can be virtually certain they're off-island.

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So, a wonderful place to live. But, as my liberal friends like to point out, not the most obvious place for *me* to live. It is, after all, a planned community. All my anti-collectivist instincts, it is true, rebel against that notion, and I am more than a little chagrined that I live in what leftists like to call a social laboratory. But there it is and there I am.

There's also the island's politics. Even by Manhattan standards, Roosevelt Island is left-wing to the point of looniness. In the 1992 presidential race, Bill Clinton got 78 percent of the local vote, George Bush 15 percent. I can safely claim that in my five years here, I have not once voted for a candidate who carried the rest of the island. And the islanders take their politics seriously. Even the local liquor store—I think of it as People's Booze—posts notices of the next meeting of the Rainbow Coalition and features petitions furthering one or another progressive cause or candidate. The owners and clerks are very decent people, but I suspect that if they knew my politics, they would cut off my supply.

Still, the ironies cut both ways. After all, most of my liberal friends, earnest champions of integration that they are, live in largely white, middle-class neighborhoods. I, on the other hand, who have always argued that except for imposed restrictions residential patterns ought to be allowed to sort themselves out, live in as integrated a community—by any definition—as exists on Planet Earth.

It's also interesting that the island itself doesn't let its political correctness get in the way of fundamental common sense. The island, as I noted, is normally safe, but last summer we had a mini-crime wave—a flurry of robberies and muggings, most of them tied to teenagers. The public reaction, as reflected in letters to the local newspaper, was not "What are the root causes of this social deviance?" but rather "Let's round up the little sociopaths and lock them up." One woman suggested in addition that we keep out undesirables by setting up the equivalent of a border patrol on the bridge from Queens. It's amazing what a little crime will do to deconstruct liberal orthodoxy.

What's the lesson of all this? Nothing in particular, perhaps, except maybe that reality is more complicated than any of our categories. In any case, no one in the Greater New York area should take what I've written as an invitation to move here. Like so many other island people, we don't take well to newcomers. Paradise overcrowded, after all, is paradise lost. FT

Psalm #1

He does not linger with scoffers
in the slow swirl,
bubbled stem of settled
bar beer, the loiterers'
golden climb.

He sweats all day, in Presence,
mumbles among his tools.

How could he be moved?
He is the original natural man,
moving in seasons built for him.
His laugh is the laugh of water.
He does not count success.
It is his fingers.

Not so the wicked, not so.
He has no self
outside of God, sees what he is
as drives, no one behind the wheel;
chaff, before too many winds.

So how shall he stand—THEN?

But God roses the path
the takers of virtue choose.
It is His heart
they walk on, carefully.
But the way of the wicked
is too wide for signposts.
It is a desolate field
and offers nothing
no one can take.

David Craig

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Opinion

A Suspicion of Snobbery

J. Bottum

We have in town a store where clerks in hushed and reverent tones sell breviaries and Bibles, Holy Cards and St. Christopher medals, rosaries and coffee-table books of photographic scenes of Rome, Assisi, and the Holy Land. On the walls, and all for sale, are photos of the Pope and JFK and Mother Teresa, interspersed among the reproductions of da Vinci's *Last Supper* and other well-known paintings with religious themes. On the shelves, between the statues of the Blessed Virgin and the votive candles, are small framed posters espousing sweet and optimistic sentiments: a quotation from St. Francis inscribed on a photo of two kittens tumbled in a basket of yarn, a passage from the Psalms inscribed on a deliberately childish water-color of a rainbow and a dove. In the back they keep domestic pews and priedieus, heavy faux-Victorian things with heavy red faux-velvet cushions.

But what the clerks sell most of all are crucifixes—crucifixes and crosses, from three inches high to three feet, made of painted plaster, machine-carved wood, or chrome-plated pot-metal, overly realistic with a sickly sentimentalism or overly abstract with an indecipherable form: chintzy, ugly, cheap, and vulgar. Not inexpensive, however. The wall-mounted crucifixes are routinely priced above a hundred dollars, and their cost was the second thing that caught my eye when I went down this spring to buy a crucifix to hang up in the dining room.

But the first thing I noticed was their vulgarity and ugliness, and there followed hard upon my notice of their vulgarity and ugliness a host of awkward and distressing thoughts. Certainly one's sense of vulgarity, and possibly one's sense of ugliness, are products of one's class, and though to be an American may be to notice constantly the thousand subtle marks of class distinction, to be an American is also to be suddenly and overwhelmingly distressed by noticing that one is noticing the marks of class distinction. Even to mention class in any way that suggests there exists a class lower than one's own is to sound an anti-democratic, un-American snob.

And among the times when snobbery is out of place, the time when one goes down to buy a crucifix must surely rank high. Self-reflection is self-delusion if it shies from noticing the ways one's own judgments and feelings are class-bound, but to think about class is to step into the tar pits and to struggle to think clearly while sinking deeper in the unclean, sticky stuff of self-disgust. Standing there before the display case, watched silently by the reverent clerk, I began to think I ought to buy one of the insipid, uninspiring things in expiation of my distaste for them—and then began to think that such a thought was still class-bound, and then that the crucifixes were marks of a simpler, better faith than my own, and then that to buy one would be to indulge a sort of inverse snobbery. And behind all my thoughts stood the one fact that I found the crucifixes ugly, and behind that stood the unthinkable Crucifixion they sought to represent, and I fled out on to the loud and busy pavement, where good and everyday people strolled happily unthinking past the reassuring storefronts and reassuring shops.

Sociological studies commonly suggest that it is members of the lower middle class who feel the marks of class distinction most strongly, and yet I disbelieve the studies. One of the ways in which members of the upper middle class seek to distance themselves from the lower middle class is by affecting a cavalier disregard for class distinction. Thus the parvenu, who masters with infinite care the marks of a higher class, finds that his care is exactly the mark by which the higher class knows him for a parvenu. And thus, too, when slumming by, say, refusing to wear a coat and tie when he ought, the member of a higher class gets both the delicious thrill of indulging an anti-class rebellion and the secret self-congratulatory thought that such rebellion is actually a sign of his higher class.

And yet, sociological studies are right in one sense. If class in America is mostly about money, the marks of class distinction are particularly important for those without much. The financially comfortable and financially secure have less need to defend their status, and the declaration of a casual attitude toward class is one mark by which the comfortable and secure identify each other. The hold the lower middle class has on its place is much more tenuous, much more susceptible to financial collapse, much more pressured by migration from the neighboring lower classes, and thus the members of the lower middle class are forced to take the marks of class much more seriously. And thus, too, the members of professions that are for antique and nonfinancial reasons taken to indicate a certain class—the clergy, for example, or military officers or academics—are forced to observe the marks of class distinction in compensation for the lack of money corresponding to their cultural status.

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It is possible that class is not entirely invidious. In an essay on Hawthorne's novels, Henry James famously sets a catalogue of all the British class institutions the lack of which makes it impossible for Americans to write real novels. But class is certainly mostly invidious, and if Henry James' own novels are in some sense a profound indictment of class, then his complaint is the curious one in which the complainer complains about the absence of the thing about which he wants to complain. Perhaps, however, James' actual complaint is that class in America is both real and invisible, lacking visible institutions other than money to give it intelligible form, and thus class in America is even more invidious than class in England.

To write about class in any way other than to deny its reality, particularly to write about the higher classes, is to risk being taken for a snob—as James often is, as F. Scott Fitzgerald often is. Like a boast of humility, like shouted praise of silence, the peculiar American snobbery is a self-proclaimed impatience with snobbery. There exist nonetheless in America marks by which class distinction is enforced. The well-paid, technologically competent elite recognize each other by certain marks, and, being good snobs, recognize the lower standing of those who lack these. Some of the marks are as minor as awareness of particular brand-names (of cars, of colleges, of computers), but three larger ones come immediately to mind: a conventional accent in speech, a conventional disbelief in established religion, and a conventional anti-Victorian preference for clean and simple visual lines. However much money they may have, the bumpkins find themselves betrayed by their strong regional accents, their church-going, and their crowded rooms of clunky furniture. The elite may recoil from the taste of the lower classes, or they may ignore it, or they may go slumming in it, but they always know it.

One result of the cultural marks of the elite is that American churches have never contained less class distinction than they do now. The presence of class feeling was perhaps inevitable in American churches through most of their history. And if the American churches sincerely struggled against it, and if class feeling had less powerful effect in the churches than in other American institutions—both possible propositions—nonetheless class played its part in the formation and development of American religion. The clergy of the established churches came primarily from the class of the educated elite, and though the church-built colleges gradually widened the class origin of their divinity students, the colleges also served to enforce class by forming students in the taste and manners of the educated. Like to like, the clergy through much of the nineteenth century could appeal for church funds to the wealthy, and through much of the nineteenth century, Americans of nearly all classes met in churches built and manned in the taste of the educated elite. And if the churches were nonetheless vulgar and provincial, it was with the vulgarity and provinciality that marked all things American.

As the election of Andrew Jackson signalled the approaching end of the educated classes' domination of American politics, so, by the end of the nineteenth century, easy money and antireligious intellectualism signalled the approaching end of the educated classes' domination of American religion. As the correspondence between the possession of money and cultural class began to break down, the cultural elite found themselves called upon less and less to direct the new religious institutions that were welling up from the lower classes. And as the members of the cultural elite gradually formed themselves into a class of technicians and advisors to expanding rival institutions—colleges, newspapers, the government—they became less and less interested in directing religious institutions.

By the 1920s, the cultural class distinction between believers and nonbelievers was firmly in place. When H. L. Mencken wrote his famous descriptions of the coarse, indecent, gibbering fundamentalists gathered in Dayton for the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial, he was expressing no new thought, but giving at last exact expression to feelings of class distinction that had been building for fifty years. Educated people, the cultural elite, certainly did not want to go to church with the vulgar, unwashed hayseeds shouting Bible fundamentalism against science, progress, and liberal sentiment.

They did not, in fact, want to go to church at all. Some class distinction among churches developed in America through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but it proved mostly transient. The mainline Protestant churches that at one time attracted the elite (and consequently found themselves identified with the elite) have in the last few decades suffered catastrophic losses in membership. The Catholic Church, with its older traditions, European associations, and sense of being kept outside American culture, may have maintained class plurality longer, as indeed may have American Judaism. But they too have suffered from the antireligious mark of class distinction. American churches have never contained less cultural class distinction than they do now, but that is because they now contain only a single class.

Cultural class distinction can be abused as a device for sociological explanation. One way, for instance, to explain the judicial activism of the last forty years might be by pointing out that the courts are the only branch of government still in the hands of the educated elite—left to the elite in their class role as educated advisors, but used by the elite to enforce their tastes and prejudices against the lower classes. Such explanations fail, however, if only because they are incomplete. Cultural class certainly forms a distinction among Americans, but it is a distinction in competi-

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tion with a cloud of other distinctions—of financial class, of race, of locale, of gender, of language, of democratic feeling. No one's motives spring from a single source.

And yet, the fact remains that a low suburban taste pervades American religion. The spiritual life cares nothing for class, and too much awareness of class can only interfere with one's ability to enter the spiritual life. But religion has a public face in a secular nation; it performs its actions on a social stage, and actions on the social stage invariably indicate something about class. People who go to church build churches, and it is in the taste of people who go to church that churches get built. When the educated elite abandoned religion, they left the performance of religion to the vulgar and thereby lost all right to complain of the vulgarity of the result. Architects may identify themselves with the educated professional classes, and thus resist the taste of their clients for a while, but eventually the taste of the client wins out—as indeed it ought. So too the clergy may resist the taste of their rich parishioners for a while. But though (thanks to their education and the vestiges of old class distinction still clinging to them) the clergy tend to identify themselves with the educated class, they come nowadays mostly from the same class as their parishioners, whose taste and manners are their own. And though their education may have gentrified them in some ways, American suspicion of snobbery prevents the clergy from receiving in the course of their education much training in educated taste and manners.

In Latin Christendom, in Orthodox Greece, perhaps even on the revival circuit in the American Bible Belt, there is a festival vulgarity to religion that no one could call upper class, but that is nonetheless vibrant, earthy, dramatic, and strong—precisely because it does not stop to consider class. The worst thing about class distinction in America is that it poisons our ability to express aesthetic judgments. Without sounding like a snob, without being a snob, I do not know how to phrase my complaint that our parish church is built in the style of a Swiss skiing chalet, that it is festooned with pastel and paisley, that the abstract designs in its new stained-glass windows are ugly, poorly made, and meaningless.

And yet, the complaint needs to be made. The problem with the crucifixes for sale downtown is not just that they are vulgar, or just that they are ugly, or just that they are shoddy. The problem is that they, like most public performances of American religion, are suburban in the worst sense of the word: simultaneously vulgar and expensive, simultaneously class-conscious and class-bound, simultaneously timid and ornate.

J. Bottum *recently moved from Baltimore to New York in order to take up his new position as Associate Editor of* First Things.

In the Absence of Fathers

David Gutmann

The radical feminists are using the O. J. Simpson tragedy to trash their usual suspects: "patriarchal" men. Stimulated—perhaps overstimulated—by the fallen hero's case, Mariah Burton Nelson for one has gotten a good deal of media ink for charging that the patriarchal sports world "trains men to hate women." Though Simpson was the son of an abandoning father rather than a patriarch, his misogynistic violence is nevertheless blamed on the woman-hating culture that supposedly breeds in exclusively masculine redoubts: certain combat units, college fraternities, and ballplayers' locker rooms.

But even as the gender feminists accuse patriarchal men of the appetite for violence against women, they themselves, in their usual imperious fashion, want to have it all, including the right to hold, simultaneously, two mutually incompatible moral and political positions. On the one hand, they are justifiably outraged by the evidence of increasing domestic violence against women, but on the other hand they are utterly committed to bringing about, within the American family, and under the antiviolence banner, the conditions that underwrite and even guarantee male violence.

The feminists aver that the male tendency to violence is not innate, not a law of human nature, but a mutable product of our social nurture: it is a breakdown product of patriarchy (particularly white, Western patriarchy) and can be blunted and overcome only by implicit gynocracy, or by androgynous parenting arrangements—fathers and mothers as clones of one another. To this great end, the female presence must be injected into all the festering compost heaps of patriarchy and gynophobia: women must be enrolled in combat units, female reporters must have free access to men's locker rooms, and fraternities must either be disbanded or degendered. The "empowerment" of women and the concomitant disempowerment of men is the only cure for noxious patriarchy and the antiwoman violence that it presumably sponsors.

They don't get it. After decades of exposure to the social and psychological disasters, particularly those afflicting our inner cities, that have accompanied the deconstruction of American fatherhood, the gender feminists still don't get it. Though they insist that such cannot be the case, it becomes increasingly clear that the mayhem inflicted by violent men on women (and on other men, and on society as a whole)

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has its roots not in conventional patriarchy, but in the increasingly matriarchal nature of the American family. Ever since Philip Wylie wrote his angry text on American "Momism" back in the thirties, various astute commentators, including a number of women, have been telling us that American children, and especially boys, need more patriarchy—in the best sense of that term—and not more "empowered" matriarchs. These children particularly need fathers who are different from their estimable mothers in equally admirable ways: tough without being macho brutes, stern without being petty tyrants, and yes, affectionate—but on the whole, less nurturing than their wives.

I can write these heresies without fear of reprisal from the politically correct: I resigned long ago from the American Psychological Association, and at my age I no longer worry about building a career. It is, of course, not enough to be outrageous; unfashionable views must be bolstered by evidence, including a brief review of the young boy's psychological development in the two-parent nuclear family. We should consider the basic requirements for "good enough" masculine development, as well as the predictably bad consequences—for example, the strong likelihood of male violence against women—when certain bottom-line requirements are violated.

Thus, as we consider the new uniparental or bimaternal parenting (for example: "Murphy Brown"/ single mother households or lesbian couples) we have to evaluate not only the well-being, freedom, and rights of those engaged in these unorthodox arrangements, but also the developmental requirements of the children that they presume to raise. What is good for General Motors is not necessarily good for the country; and what feels good to new-style or homosexual mothers is not on that account necessarily good for their kids. Mother Nature may be female, but she is not, in the current sense of that term, a feminist. She does not accredit parenting arrangements that flout her laws, even if they are promoted—in thunder—by a self-anointed Sisterhood.

Let us begin with one of Mother Nature's clear ordinances, a developmental imperative that is recognized, in both ritual and common practice, by all successful human societies. It is this: in order to mature as distinct individuals and as future fathers, at some culturally recognized point boys have to separate, in the psychological sense, from their mothers—whose biological destiny they do not share. Men's work is done on the communal periphery; thus, before they can become creatures of the perimeter, and long before they can begin to think of themselves as reliable parents, boys have to free themselves from the sense that they are extensions of the mother—that they are no more than their mothers' home-hugging little sons.

At the proper season, patriarchal fathers—fathers, that is, who are different from admirable mothers in their own impressive ways—play a unique role in fostering their sons' psychological migration away from the Magna Mater and towards some worthy role on the periphery. The competent father, seemingly adequate to all challenges (very much including provocations from his son), stands forth in the son's eyes as enviable but also admirable: a pillar of strength. As such, he spreads an umbrella of security under which the son can temporarily shelter, even as he slowly declares himself to be a distinct person, separate from the mother. Thus the father whose special, "patriarchal" virtues distinguish him from the mother becomes at the proper season what the psychoanalysts call a "transitional object": standing apart from the mother, he provides a secure way station on the son's psychological voyage away from her, and allows that risky evolution to go forward.

Traditional societies typically organize rights of passage, ordeals of one sort or another, to mark the boy's passage from the status of "mother's son" to that of "father's son." The ordeal, whether it entails penile sub-incision with cowrie shells, or being responsible at age thirteen for the day's Torah portion, is usually managed by the community's collective fathers, who closely monitor the candidate for signs of weakness. If the boy breaks and cries under the ordeal, then he is still his mother's son, not ready to join the male collectivity of fathers and age-mates of the community's perimeter. But if he endures with some grace the punishment that the fathers mete out, then he has earned the right to be their son, the apprentice who will some day inherit their special powers. Under that sign, he can continue the process of individuation, and separate from the father—just as he had earlier on separated from the mother—to become finally his own man.

Besides sponsoring the boy's symbolic rebirth as a father's son, "patriarchal" dramas of this sort also sponsor the boy's growing mastery over his violent drives—the destructive impulses that place him, early in life, in opposition to the father and the father's law. Despite their many faults, patriarchal fathers are the best means that our species has devised for managing a very grave threat to any organized social life: male—particularly young male—violence. Our streets have been "Beirut-ized" by violence from sons without fathers, and without superegos.

The fathers' role in bringing civilization in the form of the superego to their sons has been clarified by many psychoanalysts, the leading students of what is known as the "Oedipal" track in child development. In their narrative, little boys, charged up with untested illusions of omnipotence, are driven early on to challenge the prerogatives and possessions of the father. If they come up against true patriarchs, fathers who are neither antagonized nor intimidated by their small sons' enmity, these same little

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boys are quickly (and with real relief on their part) introduced to some basic propositions of the masculine reality principle: "You are not big, powerful, and supremely competent; instead, you are small, puny, and completely unready. However, matters can change; and if you pay him proper respect, your father will help you escape from your unfortunate condition."

Thus, when the small sons of patriarchal fathers realize—however grudgingly—that they cannot win the father's prerogatives and powers by force, they are ready to receive another bulletin from reality: "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em." Young sons give up infantile fantasies of coopting the father's powers by violence in favor of a disciplined filial apprenticeship. From then on, a boy's self-esteem will be based increasingly on experiences of real mastery, rather than on hectic fantasies of omnipotence.

The boy concedes his own omnipotence to his father; and through the intervention of his father, gives his potentially antisocial aggression a positive, prosocial sign. In effect, the boy's aggression follows the general line of masculine evolution: as he becomes a "father's son" and moves his sights beyond the mother's home, his aggressive potentialities track with him, and find new targets. From now on, his enemies will not be found in his own house or significant community, but will come to him from the outside, from beyond the periphery. Fathers' sons can be very good killers, but not of their kin, or their neighbors. Mothers' sons by contrast are indiscriminate: they are murderously aggressive *within* the home as well as outside of it—they are apt to abuse their aging relatives, their wives, and their children. But while the admittedly square and even priggish sons of patriarchal fathers may grow up to patronize the women of their house and town, they very rarely assault them. Instead, they are protective (sometimes overly protective) of their mothers, wives, girlfriends, and daughters: when killing is involved, they kill the men who come from the outside to hurt their women and children.

In short, the boy comes out of the Oedipal engagement with a built-in internal presence: the superego, the sometimes harsh inner monitor that will not let him hurt—or even think of hurting—those whom he either loves or should love. But restriction is not the whole story. Via the superego the father's son also gains an *internal* (and therefore trustworthy) sense of resource: so long as he acts in the service of his community, and against the enemies of his loved ones, he will have access to his *own* vital energies, his own iron rations of the psyche. Now he can make and fill his own bottles; he is, in the psychological sense, weaned. Thus assured, the boy is ready to slip the psychic umbilicus and graduate from "mother's son" to "father's son." It does not much matter whether this transition is accomplished informally within the home, or formally, via rites of passage, in the larger society; in either case, the son is launched, under the father's aegis, on the journey away from the mother and into maturity.

This is not an ideal outcome—after all, as the feminists remind us, the father's son is still quite capable of violence against *foreign* women—but considering the usual alternatives it is about the best that we can expect. But what of the boys who grow up under the ambiguous familial conditions that are rapidly replacing normal patriarchy? What is the fate of sons who grow up without a father, or with a father who is little more than an androgynous, often ineffectual, clone of the mother?

One consequence is clear: in the absence of a compelling father, the mother's presence fills not only the outer domestic frame, but also her son's interior psychic space. These boys—the offspring of single women, lesbian couples, or devalued "pops"—will not, in the proper season, attain psychological distance from their mothers. But children without fathers will usually find alternative, though less trustworthy ways to cut the golden cord. Boys who cannot achieve *psychological* distance from their mothers fall back instead on unreliable substitutes: physical distance and social distance.

Physical distance they achieve by flight: from the mother's home to the streets, to the fighting gangs that rule them and, at the end of the day, to the all-male fraternity of the penitentiary. Social distance they achieve by moving out of the mother's cultural world, and off her scale of values; unable finally to split from the mother, they provoke her—through criminality, addiction, sexual exploitation, and physical violence against women *within the domestic space*—into throwing them out of her decent house. Finally, they turn to booze and drugs to get the transient soothing, the comfort that they can no longer take (or expect) from their mother's hand. Through such desperate means, fatherless sons demonstrate—to the world, to their mothers, and to themselves—that they are Men. Finally, by their physical and verbal assaults on women they try to kill off the unrelinquished "woman"—the psychic after-image of the mother—within themselves.

In its essence, this could be the story of O. J. Simpson, whose case is being litigated as I write. Simpson is certainly not a typical product of misogynist patriarchy, taught by his seniors and locker-room companions to bash women. Quite the contrary: at age forty-seven, he seems to be the prototypical "mother's son," now wrecked by the troublesome passage into midlife. We have been studying casualties of his sort—black and white, rich and poor— in my clinical service for middle-aged and older adults for the past fifteen years.

Despite his celebrity O. J.'s history is in no way atypical of the syndrome. For starters, the father, known in the neighborhood as "Sweet Jimmy" Simp-

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son, was hardly your stereotypical patriarch. Instead, he was a reported homosexual, who apparently left O. J.'s mother for a man when his son was three years old, and who died, probably of AIDS, in 1986. Left alone, O. J.'s tough and devoted mother overcomes daunting odds to raise him. Nevertheless, as a teenager he predictably splits from her into the world of gangs and dope. Far from being corrupted by patriarchy, he is rescued by a celebrated black man: hearing that a potentially great athlete is screwing up, Willie Mays shows O. J. the exciting world that could be his. Thus sponsored by a "father figure," O. J. finds a route away from the mother's world that does not lead through the dangerous streets. He accepts the patriarchal discipline of coaches and locker rooms, goes on to win the Heisman Trophy, and becomes the legendary "Juice."

Pace Ms. Mariah Burton Nelson, Simpson's violent urges towards women do not really bloom until he retires from football, when he *quits* the locker room. Having lost the masculine cosmetic of the sports world—the fatherly coaches, the male allies, of the NFL—Simpson (like many of our midlife patients) is then probably threatened anew by his unsundered ties to the mother within, and to her feminine exemplars in the outside world. Once again he is in danger of becoming a "Mama's boy." Having lost the "patriarchal" or sportsman's route away from the feminine, he seems to fall back on his last-ditch, emergency buffers: behaving much like a threatened teenager, he interposes physical and social distance between himself and the dangerous women. Thus he divorces two wives, he is certainly violent towards Nicole Simpson, and driven by his pathological jealousy—the usual fears of a man insecure about his masculinity—he may have killed her. The troubles of a poorly fathered son can afflict not only his childhood and adolescence, but his later years as well.

Most reasonable adult human beings—including the fathers that I have interviewed in peasant societies around the world—are quite aware of the psychological need for patriarchy along the lines that I have described. It is only news to the gender feminists, who have ruled out the very idea of an essential human nature. Thus, the Murphy Browns of this world can for a while demonstrate their independence by having babies out of wedlock, raising them without fathers while holding down taxing professional jobs. They can play the narcissistic game of having it all: career, independence from exploitative men, *and* babies.

But while the parental imperative can be temporarily violated, the transgressors eventually run afoul of the most stringent rule in nature: that of unintended and often catastrophic consequences. Thus, even as these new-wave mothers congratulate themselves on their own boldness and "growth," their sons, and eventually they themselves, will be at risk. The child-rearing revolutions that, in the name of women's liberation from patriarchy, diminish the fathers lead paradoxically but inevitably to the loss of women's freedom that results from desperate male violence.

Loud blasts from the trumpets of ideology temporarily drown out the muted but insistent voice of the reality principle, but nature denied eventually returns, usually in its most primitive forms. "Take Back the Night" protests will neither repair the damage nor reverse the social entropy that causes it. A measure of patriarchy in the home is, paradoxically, the major guarantor of democracy in our public life. We may still have a choice: either recognize the special grace and status of the father within the family, or eventually suffer—and probably in this order—criminal anarchy, then the Police State, and finally the iron rule of Big Brother over our domestic and public affairs.

DAVID GUTMANN *is Professor of Psychology and Education at Northwestern University and author, most recently, of* Reclaimed Powers: Men and Women in Later Life *(Northwestern University Press).*

ON THE OTHER HAND

Immigration: The Solution Is the Problem

Peter L. Berger

The current debate over immigration policy cuts across the conventional political and ideological divides. It is also multifaceted. Probably the most important facet has to do with disagreements over the economic impact of both legal and illegal immigration: Are immigrants, in the aggregate, an asset or a liability to the economy? Do immigrants constitute an intolerable burden on the institutions of the welfare state? And, depending on how one answers the foregoing two questions, what would be a reasonable level of immigration and what should be the criteria by which immigrants are admitted? Then there is the civil liberties facet: Would effective measures to curb illegal immigration endanger the civil liberties of everyone, citizens and noncitizens alike? I will not

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address these questions here (though I should freely admit that all my instincts are pro-immigration—hardly surprising in someone who came to this country as an immigrant himself). Rather I want to comment on another, also very important, aspect of the debate—namely, the cultural aspect.

An argument is being made that, given the massiveness and the ethnic character of immigration today, the traditional pattern of Americanization can no longer be relied upon to absorb all these people into the culture. In consequence, there is a real danger of American society being increasingly balkanized and overwhelmed by the social pathologies flourishing in a multiplicity of ethnic subcultures. This argument frequently has a repulsive racist undertone, but that fact should not lead one to dismiss it out of hand. On the face of it, the argument is not without intellectual merit; nevertheless, I believe, it is thoroughly mistaken.

The alleged problem here is the presence of large numbers of non-Americanized people. Their numbers should be reduced. Beyond that, however, the implied solution is Americanization. Whatever number of immigrants remain, every effort should be made to Americanize them (notably through the educational system). In this way, supposedly, political balkanization and a miscellany of social pathologies will be contained. I propose the opposite: Americanization is the problem, not the solution.

Contemporary American culture suffers from two (possibly, though not necessarily, related) pathologies. One is based in the so-called underclass. It is the one that is most prominent in public opinion. It includes crime, drugs, illegitimacy, and a chaotic breakdown of moral order. The other pathology, arguably much more serious because much more difficult to contain, is grounded in the elite culture (or, if you prefer, in the New Class). It is animated by an assemblage of more or less demented ideologies derived from the 1960s that have now completed their "long march through the institutions," debasing the educational system from top to bottom, politics and the law, the communications media, and increasingly the very fabric of everyday life.

The large majority of Americans is squeezed in by these two spreading "tangles of pathology" (to use Kenneth Clark's apt metaphor). There can be little doubt as to which of the two is spreading more insidiously. People from the underclass may steal one's car, disfigure the city streets, and burden one's tax bill with the unfortunate consequences of their lifestyle. But it is people from the cultural elite who are miseducating one's children, imposing intolerable burdens of government interference on the economy, institutionalizing a strange American replica of the Hindu caste system in politics and law, and creating a joyless world in which the most fundamental human relations, those between the sexes and the generations, are more and more poisoned.

The point to be made here is exceedingly simple: *Both of these pathologies are thoroughly homegrown.* It is native-born Americans who constitute the bulk of the underclass. It is native-born Americans who man the "commanding heights" and virtually all the lesser echelons of the elite culture. If lower-income immigrants fail to make it in America, it is not they but their children and grandchildren who steal the cars and deal in drugs—young people who were born here and who have become Americanized to the point where many of them no longer speak the language of their parents. And if immigrants successfully reach comfortable middle-class incomes, it is not they but their children and grandchildren who absorb and internalize the genuinely American lunacies of the elite culture.

I would even go one step further in this argument: If immigration were to stop completely, these twin pathologies would not diminish but intensify. As things are today, at least there are sizable numbers of people coming into this country who have strong beliefs about *not* stealing cars, about working hard and having strong families, and who have not yet learned that every encounter between a man and a woman is an exercise in power politics. Perhaps there is some hope in the expectation that at least some of them will slow down the Americanization of their offspring to the extent of transmitting these values to the latter. One should remember, too, that the balkanization of America—through a twisted logic of affirmative action, through quotas, multiculturalism run amok, and a perverse application of bilingual education—is driven, not by immigrants (who typically want none of these things), but by the graduates of the higher reaches of the American university system.

A modest proposal suggests itself here. Perhaps immigration policy should include a measured exchange of population. Any country from which large numbers of people want to come to America should be offered a deal. Its immigrant quota will be based on the number of Americans it will in turn admit as immigrants *to it.* For every American criminal deported to, say, Bangladesh, two Bangladeshis will be admitted to the United States. And for every professor of postmodernist literary theory that the University of Dacca can entice to move there (USAID could subsidize his or her salary), *twenty* Bangladeshis could come here. I can see a few constitutional problems that will have to be sorted out. But then America has no shortage of lawyers who can figure out ways to get around the details.

Peter L. Berger *is Director of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University.*

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The Zionist Imperative

Emil L. Fackenheim

Some eighty years ago, the German-Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen declared, "The Jewish people do not need a state of their own. Nor may they have one, for a state is particularistic, and conflicts with the Jewish messianic mission, which is universal."

Cohen was both a good philosopher and a good Jew; yet today no good Jew and few good philosophers would agree with this statement. What is missing here is *the timing*. The place in which Cohen made his statement is troubling: Wilhelminian Germany. And positively ominous is the time of it: just before or during the Great War. For had Cohen been a lot younger, and a lieutenant in the Kaiser's army, he might have had serving under him a corporal by the name of Adolf Hitler. Everything depends upon the timing.

Let us move on some twenty-five years. In Jewish history this is not much, and in world history it hardly counts at all.

The time is now 1939, after the Munich pact and Kristallnacht, during which throughout Germany and Austria synagogues were set on fire, Jewish stores smashed and looted, and Jews themselves carted off to concentration camps.

The place is a boat, the *St. Louis*, in the middle of the Atlantic loaded with German and Austrian Jews fleeing for their lives. The refugees were carrying Cuban visas, but on the boat's arrival in Cuba, these had not been honored, for the consul in Germany had issued invalid or phony ones. What had next taken place was a frantic search, so characteristic of the time, for some country, any country, that would give these refugees a haven. Telegrams had been sent, phone calls made, all across the huge continent of America. Wasn't there any country that would take those nine hundred men, women, and children?

There had not been. Instead the unbelievable was now happening: the captain had to turn his boat back, moving ever so slowly in the hope that rescue might yet come from somewhere. Later it would be said that the captain would have done what for a seaman is unthinkable, wreck his ship, rather than take his human cargo back to Germany, where what awaited them was a concentration camp or death. In the end, the refugees were all taken in, the lucky ones by Great Britain, the others by European countries where they would later be caught and murdered by the German invaders.

A movie of some years ago, *Voyage of the Damned*, captured this episode truthfully, which is to say that it was all black and white, good and evil. The Jewish victims, if not that good, were in any case innocent. The other side was pure evil. The critics panned the movie. It seems that good and evil does not make for suitably sophisticated drama. That, however, happened to be the way it was.

My wife and I saw the movie in a Toronto suburb where few Jews live, and that night the audience was mostly kids. The critics may have been bored, but the kids were fascinated. In my experience most kids have an innate sense of decency. At the movie's end, there silently flashed on the screen the names of each of the Jews on the *St. Louis* and what happened to them. When the names of ones who were saved appeared there was applause. When one of the Nazis, hit by a falling beam during an air raid, was listed as killed, again there was applause. Finally, we were told about the fate of the captain: after the war he was investigated by de-Nazifiers, but was let off when some of the Jews from the *St. Louis* testified in his

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM, *the distinguished theologian and philosopher, is a Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has written extensively about religious responses to the Holocaust in such works as* To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought, God's Presence in History, *and* The Jewish Return to History. *His latest book, a collection of essays entitled* Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy, *will be published by Indiana University Press later this year.*

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behalf. At this point, it was I who led the applause.

The movie showed a good deal, but it did not show everything. A Jewish leader named Nahum Goldmann had gone to see Cordell Hull, the U.S. Secretary of State, to plead with him on behalf of the nine hundred. Hull replied that his duty was to guard U.S. immigration laws. Goldmann then wondered aloud what would happen if, with their ship anchored just outside the Statue of Liberty, these people were to jump overboard. Surely, Goldmann speculated, they could not be left to drown. Surely they would be picked up. They could then be interned on Ellis Island, but at least they would be safe. To which Hull replied that Goldmann was the most cynical man he had ever met.

Canada had no immigration laws, only mostly secret practices mostly administered by one Frederick Blair. In his diary Blair relates how three leading Jews came to plead with him on behalf of the passengers on the *St. Louis*. Blair writes that he advised the three to gather in a synagogue and meditate on the question of why Jews were so universally disliked.

In light of the foregoing, there are two things to be said in response to Hermann Cohen: one, the Jews do need, if not a state, then at least a haven; and two, whatever the Jewish messianic mission might be, no one seems to want it.

Let us move on, just three to five years—Jewish history, along with world history, moved fast in those years. The following is the record of the testimony given by a Polish guard at the Nuremberg trial.

> *Witness*: Women carrying children were always sent with them to the crematorium. The children were then torn from their parents outside the crematorium and sent to the gas chambers separately. When the extermination of the Jews in the gas chambers was at its height orders were issued that the children were to be thrown into the crematorium furnaces or into the pit near the crematorium, without being gassed first.
> *Smirnov* (*Russian prosecutor*): How am I to understand this? Did they throw them into the fire alive, or did they kill them first?
> *Witness:* They threw them in alive. Their screams could be heard in the camp.
> *Smirnov:* Why did they do this?
> *Witness:* It is difficult to say. We do not know whether they wanted to economize on gas, or whether it was because there was not enough room in the gas chambers.

Now the two conclusions reached above become even more precise: first, whatever the Jewish messianic mission might be, it cannot be this, that our children are to be thrown into the fires alive, so that their screams are heard, far away; and second, what is needed is, quite simply, a Jewish state.

In thinking about the second conclusion, let us conduct an experiment in historical imagination. Suppose that the captain of the *St. Louis* has turned away from America and is heading back to Europe, as slowly as the engines permit. He hears a news item on the radio: a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine. He shouts to the engine room, "Change course, and full steam ahead!" The news spreads to the hapless refugees and, hapless no more, they sing and dance without letup until the blessed coast comes into sight, and with it, thousands of people waiting on the beach to welcome and celebrate them—those nine hundred whom the world has despised and rejected. A messianic moment lights up a world of darkness—indeed, the darkest ever.

Why were the railways to Auschwitz never bombed? No one knew what was happening there? But people did. It was not feasible? But a factory only a few miles away was bombed. Had there been a Jewish state, armed with ten rickety planes, they would have done it, or perished in the attempt.

I try to imagine myself inside one of the boxcars in which the Jews were transported to their fate, but cannot. I do know this for certain, however: the despair inside those cars is being made complete by the realization of utter abandonment—was there ever an abandonment like unto this? Suddenly there is a roar of bombs exploding all around. The fear that one might hit the train and kill them grips those inside. Even so, what may be their last moment on earth is lit by a messianic spark: someone has seen, and cares.

Messianic moments, then, need not be altogether absent from the world of the Holocaust—at least in the historical imagination. But the truly astounding fact is that such moments were not wholly absent from the Holocaust as it actually was. At Treblinka, as group after group was marched off to be murdered, a certain Rabbi Israel Shapiro of the town of Grodinsk was asked by his flock for some words. This is what he said: Some rabbis of old forbade calculating the End, on the grounds that the time of it was a mystery, but also expressed the wish not to be there when it happened, since the sufferings that went with it would be too terrible. But, Shapiro went on to ask, what sufferings could be more terrible than these? This, then, must be the End and rather than wish not to be here, we should accept its sufferings and rejoice in the privilege they contain, for our ashes will purify Israel and the world.

Among the religious, then, Rabbi Shapiro considered his fate blessed and chosen. But so, among the secularists, did Mordecai Anielewitz, the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, who fought and died in it. "Blessed and chosen" are the words he used in his last letter. The uprising was hopeless; never was an undertaking more so. Then why "blessed"? He had seen

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the birth of the Jewish resistance. This he had written, and Yitzhak Zuckerman, who survived, explained what he had meant. "Why did we fight, when our uprising was doomed? We did it for future Jewish generations."

We listen to Rabbi Shapiro and his martyrs on the one hand, and Mordecai Anielewitz and his heroes on the other—and if any faith, hope, and humanity is left in us after the Holocaust, it is because of such as these: if only God and man would listen, the messianic redemption would come at once.

Again we move on but a few years. The place is Tel Aviv, Israel. The time, 1948, after the State of Israel, proclaimed on May 14, has fought off six invading Arab armies. Ben Gurion and Chief Rabbi Herzog are reviewing the returning soldiers, among them Holocaust survivors who, not much earlier, had been near-skeletons. Ben Gurion, who likes to tease the religious, turns to the rabbi and, pointing at the soldiers, observes that they had managed without miracles. "You do not understand," replied Herzog. "These *are* the miracle."

The miraculous, nay, messianic, aspect of the founding of the Jewish state is articulated in a prayer written at the behest of Chief Rabbi Maimon and now widely in use, in the Diaspora as well as in Israel. In this prayer the state is referred to as *reshit tzemichat geulatenu*, "the beginning of the growth of the [messianic] redemption."

The prayer—in any case controversial if only because it identifies a fact empirically actual as messianic, and a political one to boot—has been criticized as the result of a dilettantish mixing of two metaphors, "the beginning" of the redemption and "the growth" of it. As it happens, the poet Shmuel Yosef Agnon, no dilettante, had a share in this formulation. But the state is the "beginning" of the redemption—not more than that—and the "growth" that is needed is not something gradual and smooth, let alone automatic, but rather precarious and not without grave reverses. Is the "beginning"—that is, the state itself—also to be subject to reverses or even the threat of one great catastrophic reversal? To avert this threat is, on the part of the "religious," the core of prayer to the Divine, and, on the part of the "nonreligious," the core of commitment to action. But to avert threats to the state is an imperative that extends beyond Israelis to Jews everywhere. There is much depressing evidence that this imperative is one that can be evaded; but once honestly faced, it brooks no compromise. What if, after the Holocaust, no Jewish state had arisen? What we nowadays witness in the way of self-hatred, identity crises, assimilation, childlessness, and other forms of Jewish loss of faith would pale in comparison. And, to go further, what if the Jewish state, having arisen, were destroyed? No result is conceivable other than that Jewish faith and morale, and the Jews themselves—all shaken by the Holocaust, whether they know it or not—would dissolve in terminal despair. The final solution aimed at by Hitler would be complete.

One cannot speak of a Zionist imperative, or at any rate not of this kind of unconditional and universal one, for the time prior to the Holocaust. The closest thing to it is expressed in a vote taken at the World Zionist Congress of 1905. At Easter of 1903 forty-nine Jews had been murdered in a pogrom in the city of Kishinev. It was imperative that Jews in Eastern Europe be rescued speedily, and the Congress considered replacing its far-off goal of reclaiming Palestine as the Jewish homeland with a tract of land in Uganda that was at that moment being offered for immediate possession by the British government. But the Ugandan alternative was voted down, including by the delegates from Kishinev: theirs was the most authoritative vote.

Even so, a Jewish homeland in Palestine lacked the force of an imperative, or at any rate of an unconditional and universal one. Even Theodor Herzl, the father of modern political Zionism (who died after the Uganda offer was made but before the Congress voted on it), had been prepared to consider the alternative.

So things stood before the Holocaust. How was it after, and indeed how has it been ever since? On November 29, 1947, the United Nations passed a resolution partitioning Palestine and endorsing a Jewish state in one of the two parts. But, in the absence of plans for enforcement, and with Arab violence already erupting and worse sure to come after the British withdrawal, U.S. delegate Warren Austin rose in the General Assembly on March 18, 1948 to propose that implementation be postponed in favor of a UN trusteeship over all of Palestine. U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall, no mean military expert, advised the leaders of the Jewish community of Palestine to accept the proposal, that is, to refrain from proclaiming their state, lest it be strangled at birth by superior Arab forces. But David Ben Gurion, supported by the other seven men and one woman who were charged with the decision, accepted the advice of the World Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann rather than that of the American general. "Declare the state," Weizmann advised from his sickbed in New York, "now or never." And on May 14, 1948, Ben Gurion proclaimed the first Jewish state in 1,813 years. The people danced that day in the streets of Tel Aviv (as did Jews in the streets of New York).

To heed Weizmann's rather than Marshall's advice was to obey an imperative that brooked no compromise and was universal—that is, for the Jews of Israel to act on and for Jews elsewhere to support. For twelve years the Jewish people had found the world divided between relentless enemies and feeble friends. For twelve years the Jewish people had been an object, powerless to be an agent in its own behalf,

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unable to act as a subject. After this, were the Jews of Palestine to consent to being shut up in a Palestinian ghetto, still at the mercy of enemies and lukewarm friends? Were Jewish refugees, wherever they were, once again to look, cap in hand, for some nice country to take them, hoping that there would be one, fearing that there would not? Were Jews both in Palestine and the Diaspora to place all their trust in a world conscience that had just failed so disastrously? To yield to any of this would have been blasphemy against the murdered millions and, indeed, against the God of Israel.

Obedience to this first unconditional imperative soon led to a second. In 1950 the Knesset passed three laws. The first abolished the death penalty. The second instituted the death penalty for crimes of the Holocaust exclusively. The third was the Law of Return.

Between them, the first two of these laws define the state, on the one hand, as humane and, on the other, as post-Holocaust. To this day no Arab terrorist, however heinous his crimes, has been put to death by an Israeli court; yet in 1961 the death penalty was meted out to Adolf Eichmann, after law had taken its course by the highest of standards.

The third law, the Law of Return, is post-Holocaust and Jewish at once. The laws of every other state make would-be immigrants show cause why they should be admitted. The Law of Return makes the Jewish state *itself* show cause why Jewish immigrants should not be admitted. Since the passage of this law, there still is Jewish exile, but there are no longer Jewish refugees. For a Jewish state, the Law of Return was a Jewish necessity; and because of the Holocaust, the passing of it could not be postponed for even one year. As early as 1950, it posed risks for the young state, and its consequences were unforeseeable. It was a large event in the "growth of the redemption."

Which takes us to June 7, 1967, the third day of the Six-Day War. On that day, Israeli troops returned to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, after having been forced out of the ancient part of the city by the Jordanian army in 1948. For Jews worldwide it was an event of destiny and arguably the most profound Jewish religious experience since the beginning of the second exile.

Jews remember a previous return. The ten tribes exiled to Assyria were "lost" and had never returned. But what did occur was the return to Jerusalem of the two surviving tribes that were later exiled to Babylonia. This first return changed Jewish life, faith, history. It also did much to change the world. After all, between them, Christians and Muslims share large parts of the globe, and without the Jewish return to Jerusalem neither Christianity nor Islam—"daughter religions" of Judaism as they are sometimes called—would have come into being.

And now, on June 7, 1967, there was a second Jewish return to Jerusalem. But for the Six-Day War, it would not have happened, nor would it if Jordan, as urged by Israel, had stayed out of that war. The return was thus unexpected. Yet within three weeks Israel passed a law making Jerusalem the capital of the state, forever to remain undivided, forever to remain Jewish.

So quick and firm a decision would not have been taken had it not been understood as the imperative of a historic moment. A Zionism of longing and prayer, born in the first exile, had been deep and strong enough to be renewed in the second; and—this is an astonishing fact, inexplicable by ordinary reason—neither the length nor the many-sided experiences of that second exile caused Jews to forget Jerusalem. Without the centuries-long religious Zionism of "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand lose its cunning," its modern-secular successor would never have had a chance. Because of Zion the secular Zionism of action could live, grow, stay alive, even when Jerusalem was only a longed-for dream. It could live and grow, and it did. However, to have reached Jerusalem and be made to leave it again—that would be the death of Zionism. Today, this much is clear: with its decision in 1967 to make Jerusalem its capital, Israel was obeying the last great Zionist imperative rising from the Holocaust—as unconditional and universal as the other three. Zionism stands on four pillars: the Land, the State, the Law of Return, and Jerusalem. If any one of these pillars were to collapse, so would the entire edifice.

So we arrive at today. On August 20, 1993 the Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO, hitherto supersecret, was revealed to the world. Enemies of Israel were surprised along with its friends. Not least, the Israelis themselves were surprised—none, certainly no dissenters, had been informed—and so were Jews everywhere. And then, on September 13, came the Washington handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat, televised to the four corners of the world. It is little wonder that Zionists are in search of a new imperative for today, one that will be as compelling and universal as the earlier ones.

But what imperative? At one extreme, there are Jews who seem to hear flutterings of the messianic dove, afraid only that "peace-wreckers" may drive it away. At the other extreme there are those who fear that catastrophe may overtake redemption, that the state itself, the very "beginning of the growth" of that redemption, has been placed in jeopardy.

In the Winter 1993 issue of *Reform Judaism* two writers respond to the Oslo agreement. One, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, is President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The other, Albert Vorspan, is director, recently retired, of the UAHC's Social Action Center in Washington. Neither man, to be sure, writes officially on behalf of the organiza-

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tion, to say nothing of individual members of it. On the other hand, neither writes, nor can be read, simply as a private citizen.

Rabbi Schindler asserts that "Israel's defense forces constitute the fourth most powerful military force in the world today," that the security risk in the Oslo agreement, "such as it is," is "hardly inordinate," since, "when the lion lies down with the lamb, it is the lamb, not the lion, who lies down anxiously." Critics of the agreement, therefore—whoever they are and whatever their criticism—are one and all "wreckers of the peace," or at best "doubters" who will do harm unless "countered."

Is Israel the world's fourth strongest military force? Not that one has ever heard except from the country's enemies, who are bent on weakening and, if possible, disarming, the state. Even if it were true, when has Israel ever been threatened or attacked by one Arab state alone? What, then, of future threats? At least three Arab anti-Israel alliances can easily be imagined, all potentially lethal. As for the Palestinians being the "lambs" in the agreement, what of the Syrians, Iraqis, Iranians, Saudis, and others, all able to turn them into lions?

Rabbi Schindler belittles the dangers far more than the Israeli government whose initiative he supports. This is because he dreams what he calls "great dreams":

> It [the moment of the Oslo agreement revelation, or of the handshake] allowed us to dream great dreams—of Israel as the Hong Kong of a new Middle East, of Jews and Palestinians joining forces to build it, to create a united continent of great tolerance and real freedom, of science, of education and understanding.

A united *continent*? Traditional Jews may be forgiven if they view their own messianic dream—of which, note well, divine intervention is an indispensable part—as a model of realism in comparison.

Is this Jewish dream, like so many others, an innocent one? Not when the situation calls for Jews to be wide-awake. In its brief history the Jewish state has more than once had to make life-or-death decisions, and the Oslo agreement, whether necessary or not, is one of them. But whereas on all previous occasions the Israelis were united, this is the first life-or-death decision that has disenfranchised half the population (give or take 10 or 20 percent—who on so grave a matter is counting?), leaving it voiceless.

Given the long-standing split in the Israeli electorate as to how to act in the peace process, did the Rabin government, in order to act at all, have to act as it did? This is arguable, but no argument can be offered in support of Schindler's dreams inspired by the Oslo agreement that should cause him to dismiss out of hand the fears aroused by it. In Israel at present, there are some who hope, and have reason to hope, that the agreement will lead to peace; there are others who fear, and have reason to fear, that it will lead to war. The accord has widened the split in the Israeli electorate gravely, not to say catastrophically, and it is no accident that the government dare not test it through an election.

In this situation, surely no Jewish effort should be spared to narrow the split; yet whether he realizes it or not, precisely at just this moment Schindler's dreams widen that split still further, for they define all opponents of the Oslo agreement, seekers after peace though they may be, as the "enemies of peace." Left voiceless, they are already injured. Wittingly or not, Schindler adds insult to injury.

Al Vorspan's dreams are much the same as Schindler's, except that they are more extreme still, for in his view nothing less than "magic" is at work in the "transformation" that is underway. Correspondingly, his view of the "wreckers, Arab and Israeli," too, is harsher. Maximally they are "fanatical," and even minimally they are "fear-mongers and cynics": "Since the end of the Second World War, we have been yoked to the memory of the Holocaust, the endless hostile siege of Israel, and the tragic plight of Soviet Jewry." *Yoked* to the memory of the Holocaust—that is what he writes—and he goes on as follows: "Whether we like it or not, the statute of limitations is running out on the Holocaust." Perhaps, then, he will heave a sigh of relief when the last survivor is dead.

For nearly half a century survivors have written, spoken, screamed, whispered that Auschwitz is a "planet" in its own right, a horror unlike any other, but never to be forgotten. For decades professors have laid their careers, and Israel its legislation, on the line in witness to the truth that there is no statute of limitation for the Holocaust crime, that if Adolf Eichmann were in hiding still, and lived for the thousand years that the Third Reich was supposed to continue, a future court would still have to hunt him down and bring him to justice. There is simply no statute of limitations here, not for the criminals and not for their victims, for the *mitzvah* to remember them, the *k'doshim*, the "holy ones." The very formulation of Vorspan's statement is offensive.

In any case, the statement is both wrongheaded and evidently false. Jews can stop being "yoked" to the Holocaust? Not if—to choose an example at random, whatever it means—the success of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* indicates anything. Not—to turn to another example, this one ominous—if the zeal of Holocaust deniers is any proof. A race is on that may well last for several centuries, and that will end in one of two possible ways. Either the Holocaust will be recognized for what it was, by theologians and philosophers, by Jews, Christians, Germans, Arabs, humanity. Or else it will be distorted into something other than it was, or even denied altogether.

The race has long been on. Israel fared well in

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1950, when it distinguished in law between other crimes and the Holocaust, and again in 1961, in the way it tried Eichmann. But that was a long time ago. How do we fare now, after the Oslo agreement and Hebron massacre? Al Vorspan's is one reaction to the Oslo agreement, Baruch Goldstein's is another. The two are far apart, and may even be viewed as opposites; but in at least one respect the opposites meet. If the statute of limitations is running out on Vorspan's Holocaust, it is because he trivializes it into but another of the world's "pathologies and demonologies," to be "cast off" as soon as possible; and if Goldstein—a religious Jew and a doctor, and thus doubly under orders to hold human life sacred—becomes a mass murderer, it is because he makes every enemy into a Holocaust criminal, and a Muslim worship service in Hebron into a stormtrooper rally in worship of Hitler. *For the one, nobody is an Auschwitz murderer, for the other, every enemy of Jews is.* So hard is it for these men, in this nerve-wracking moment in Jewish history, to come to terms with the Holocaust. So hard is it, let it be added, for us all.

For to Jews the Holocaust is not an event to read about in a few books, or to remember on a few special occasions; it is for them to confront, to agonize over, to reject and resist, to search deeply and widely for a glimmer of hope—all this with a view to a Jewish self-understanding, of which an essential part is being heir of the murdered millions, the remnant of the catastrophe. This remnant has wrested a Jewish state from the catastrophe and despair, but the state has been under siege since the day of its birth.

The greatest man of this century—when his country was besieged—inspired it, united it, and kept it inspired and united under siege for a year. But not even Winston Churchill could have kept his people inspired for a siege lasting over forty years, or kept them from fighting among themselves. No wonder that in the siege of Israel, as yet far from over, some Jews behave as though the enemy was other Jews. And it is also no wonder that the besieged are weary.

But a new Zionist imperative is gradually becoming manifest in the present, post-Oslo, post-handshake situation: it is to fight off weariness and gather strength; it is to wake up from dreams and to stay wide-awake; and it is, above all, to rally in unison in support and defense of the pillars of Zionism, not one of them as yet fully secure. The Land is secure? But Hamas and like-minded others still seek their kind of peace—the Jewish departure from Palestine. The State is secure? But the PLO Covenant still calls for its destruction: no steps have been taken to abrogate or even amend it. (A PLO member declares that to abrogate the charter would be like for Jews to abrogate the Bible.) Is the Law of Return secure? But water shortages, combined with returning Palestinians, could make it inoperative. Jerusalem? An accommodation might be found, in the end might even become imperative, but not so long as demands for a share in the city must be viewed as attacks on Zion. The Jewish return to Jerusalem, the crucial event of destiny in two millennia of Jewish history for the "religious" and the "nonreligious" alike, has yet to be accepted, with the fullness it both requires and merits, by the world.

Once Hermann Cohen found a Jewish state, which is particular, incompatible with the Jewish messianic mission, which is universal. But that was in another period, and everything, as we have said, depends on the timing. Then came the time of an imperative to declare a Jewish state as itself the redemption, the beginning of the growth of it. The Jewish state is particular—but is it at war with messianic universalism?

The question has been present ever since the second Jewish return to Jerusalem, on June 7, 1967. Neither Christianity nor Islam would have come into being without the first return: it was a light unto them and a blessing. What if the same were in the making with the second return? Perhaps a state in the "growth of redemption" yet to come is for Christian and Muslim to worship in Jerusalem, not despite the fact that the Jews have returned but because of it.

This experience for Christians, Muslims, and Jews themselves, if it ever comes, lies in the future. Already a part of the past is the Jewish return itself. Of this experience Abraham Joshua Heschel has written:

> I did not enter on my own the city of Jerusalem. Streams of endless craving, clinging, dreaming, flowing day and night, midnights, years, decades, centuries, millennia, streams of tears, of pledging, of waitings—from all over the world, from all corners of the world—carried us of this generation to the Wall. FT

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What Really Happened at Cairo

George Weigel

Gargantuan international conferences replete with diplomats, "international civil servants," various "nongovernmental organization" (NGO) representatives, and the world press have been a staple feature of world politics since the Second World War. One does not fear sinning against charity by suggesting that many of these extravaganzas (in which the international ruling class cavorts, off-hours, in the sybaritic style to which it has become accustomed) are, in the Bard's familiar words, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." But there are exceptions, and they can be important.

The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which produced the "Helsinki Accords" in 1975, was one such exception. When Leonid Brezhnev signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, he probably thought he was taking out a ninety-nine-year lease on Stalin's external empire. As things turned out, he was signing its death warrant. For "Basket Three" of the Final Act pledged the signatory nations of Europe and North America to certain human rights commitments. And those commitments in turn inspired the formation of "Helsinki monitoring groups," which were to become the backbone of the human rights resistance in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s: groups that were essential to the nonviolent collapse of communism in the Revolution of 1989 and the New Russian Revolution of 1991.

The September 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo might be another such exception, with yet another ironic outcome. The UN bureaucrats, Scandinavian politicos, Clinton Administration "global affairs" mavens, radical environmentalists, feminists, and population controllers who planned the conference intended it to be nothing less than the Great Cairo Turkey Shoot: a political slaughter in which the enemies of "individual autonomy," "sustainable growth," "global carrying capacity," "reproductive rights," "gender equity," abortion-on-demand, and the sexual revolution would be utterly, decisively routed. But they were not. Indeed, the Cairo conference just may have marked a turning point in the international debate over population and development. It is too early to know for sure, but it is just possible that the radicals' attempt to take the Cairo conference by storm set in motion moral and cultural dynamics that will, over time, result in the defeat of the radicals' agenda.

Which, if it were to come to pass, would be a *bouleversement* of world-historical proportions.

GEORGE WEIGEL, *a member of the Editorial Board of* FIRST THINGS, *is President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.*

II

Cairo was the third in a series of decennial international population conferences. The first International Conference on Population was held in 1974 at Budapest, and the second (under the enlarged banner of "Population and Development") was convened in Mexico City in 1984. Planning for both of these meetings, within the UN bureaucracy and among the thousands of NGO activists who participate in UN-sponsored programs, was dominated by strident doomsayers and hard-core population controllers of the Garrett Hardin/Paul Ehrlich ("the battle to feed all humanity is over") school. That people were essentially a problem, even a pollutant, rather than a resource; that social, political, economic, and ecological catastrophe was right around the corner, unless drastic steps were taken to stabilize and then reverse world population trends—these were the themes, familiar to even the most casual student of the American anti-natalist lobby, that set the agenda for Budapest and Mexico City.

As it happened, these notions, and the prescriptions for coercive, governmentally enforced programs of fertility reduction that flowed from them, did not sit well with many of the putative beneficiaries of "population control": namely, the countries of the developing world. At Budapest, for example, the

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population technocrats were challenged both empirically and culturally: empirically, in that it was made plain that population patterns varied widely around the world, as the result of a complex interaction of economic, social, and cultural factors; and culturally, in that it became clear that there were many different understandings of how population issues should be addressed, even among those who shared the belief that there was a "population problem." "Development is the best contraceptive" became the slogan (crude, but not inaccurate) that the Third World counterposed to the Hardin/Ehrlich anti-natalist hysteria of the well-to-do "North."

Ten years later, the population controllers suffered an outright defeat at Mexico City. Not satisfied with the results of their massive efforts to export mechanical and chemical means of contraception to the Third World (some of which had met considerable resistance on both moral-cultural and medical grounds), UN and private sector population agencies had increasingly turned to abortion as a means of family planning and population control. The Chinese policy of coercive abortion was, of course, the most draconian of such enterprises, but its extremism was merely the cruelest face of a general policy actively supported by the anti-natalists throughout the developing world. The population controllers came to Mexico City expecting the conference to give its sanction to abortion-on-demand, in the name of family planning. Yet they were soundly rebuffed. For the conference, with vigorous support from the Reagan Administration, adopted a final report that stated flatly that abortion was not a legitimate means of population control.

This was an ideological defeat for the population controllers, not least because the attention focused on the brutality of the Chinese program graphically demonstrated the lengths to which the controllers were willing to go; having seen what lay at the end of the road, some countries were prepared to question the legitimacy of embarking on the journey in the first place. But the Mexico City conference also had serious financial consequences: it resulted in restrictions on funding for abortion in UN programs; it eliminated such funding from the population components of many nations' foreign aid budgets; and, on the domestic front, it became the international legal instrument with which the Reagan and Bush Administrations forbade federal support for any public or private aid program that included abortion among its family planning activities.

As may be imagined, all of this stuck, hard, in the collective craw of the population controllers at the UN and World Bank, and among such major activist NGOs as Planned Parenthood of America and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. For not only had they suffered an ideological and financial defeat at Mexico City; they also seemed to understand, however dimly, that they had suffered a moral drubbing as well. It seemed that many people—by their lights unenlightened, authoritarian, conservative, to be sure, but influential nonetheless—believed that the population controllers were not only wrong, they were bad. And since a powerful conviction of its inherent righteousness has been perhaps the chief psychological characteristic of the population control movement for well over a century, it was this moral rejection that cut most deeply, and inflamed the controllers' determination to "go beyond Mexico City" at the next decennial conference.

The U.S. presidential election of November 1992 promised the population controllers relief, and indeed more than relief. Bill Clinton and Al Gore had, after all, run on the most radical "social issues" platform in American history, committing themselves to federal funding of abortion-on-demand in the U.S. at any stage of a pregnancy; deploring "explosive population growth" in the Third World; and pledging to use federal tax dollars to fund "greater family planning efforts" in U.S. foreign aid programs. Moreover, the Democratic Party's most vocal activists included men and women, heterosexual and homosexual, who were deeply committed to securing, in American law and public policy, the sexual revolution's core principle of individual autonomy and its severance of sexual relations from marriage. Little wonder, then, that the controllers, determined as they were to "go beyond Mexico City," read the electoral entrails of November 3, 1992 as a mandate for radical change in U.S. population policy and, a posteriori, in the agenda of the third International Conference on Population and Development, which was to be held in Cairo in September 1994.

Their expectations were met in full. Indeed, among all the twists and turns of Clinton Administration policy on issues both foreign and domestic, one constant has been an unyielding commitment to abortion-on-demand at home and massive efforts at "population control" abroad. On Clinton's first day in office, which happened to coincide with the twentieth annual "March for Life" in Washington, he signed five executive orders widening the scope of federal involvement with, and funding of, elective abortion. Rigorous pro-*Roe* litmus tests were applied to all Clinton nominees to the federal judiciary; and few doubted that the Administration wished to see abortion included as a mandated "service" in any national health care reform. Nor, in a time of fiscal restraint, did the Administration hesitate to beef up the population control portion of its foreign assistance budget. Thus ten months after taking office, the President's chief foreign aid administrator, J. Brian Atwood, announced a five-year, $75 million commitment to fund the activities of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. (Mr. Atwood defended these and other population control expenditures on the bizarre grounds that the "core" of the

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chaos in Somalia, in which U.S. troops were then embroiled, was overpopulation. Somali vital statistics may not be the world's finest, but a reasonable estimate is that Somalia, whose territory is a little larger than that of California, Washington state, Maryland, and Massachusetts combined, had a population in 1992 of some seven million, forty million fewer than the aggregate population of those four states.)

It has never been clear whether the key players in the Clinton Administration really believed that the 42.8 percent of the popular vote they garnered in 1992 constituted a genuine mandate for radical change, or whether that slim plurality impelled the more ideologically fervent members of the Administration to strike while an iron likely to cool quickly was still hot. Whatever the answer, it is indisputably the case that the Administration, led by Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Timothy Wirth, decided that merely "going beyond Mexico City" was an insufficiently grand goal for the Cairo conference. In league with several Scandinavian and West European countries, UN and World Bank population technocrats, and feminist, anti-natalist, and environmentalist NGOs, the Clintonites sought to engineer a dramatic shift in the focus of the Cairo conference. The packaging ("Population and Development") would remain, but the content would be dramatically altered—with the earth's "carrying capacity," "gender equality, equity, and empowerment of women," and "reproductive rights" supplanting mere "population and development" as the issues of moment. Which amounted, in brief, to a brazen attempt to use international law and the leverage of Western foreign aid programs to establish the sexual revolution, as lived in Stockholm and Hollywood, as the model of humane culture for the twenty-first century.

This radically altered agenda first came into focus in April 1994, when the third meeting of the Cairo conference preparatory committee (Prep-Com III) took place in New York. Among other things, this meeting underscored the ferocity of Undersecretary Wirth and his allies, who were taking no chances that open debate might put sand in the gears of their political machine. The chairman of Prep-Com III, as he would be of the Cairo conference, was Dr. Fred Sai, usually introduced as the "representative of Ghana," but in real life (so to speak), the president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Nongovernmental members of the U.S. delegation to the New York session included Bella Abzug, Jeannie Rosoff, president of the Alan Guttmacher Institute (the research arm of Planned Parenthood), Patricia Waak, director of the Audubon Society's population program, and staff members of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Rockefeller Foundation, two major funders of population control activism. Those who wished to challenge the regnant Clintonite orthodoxies were treated as mere irritants. A seminar sponsored by the United States Catholic Conference, for instance, a registered UN NGO, was denied space in the UN itself; the organizers of the seminar were forbidden to post notice of their meeting; UN officials and population activist NGOs contrived to schedule two other seminars at the same time as the USCC meeting; and meanwhile the shell organization "Catholics for a Free Choice" was given room to operate within the UN complex.

Moreover, this ugliness spilled over from the periphery into the Prep-Com's formal sessions. When Msgr. Diarmuid Martin of the Vatican delegation criticized the proposed Cairo draft document for its ethical hollowness, he was chastised publicly from the chair by Dr. Sai, who complained that the Holy See was trying to foist its notions of sexual morality on the world. Sai's remarks were boisterously applauded by a gallery packed with anti-natalist NGO activists. (Sai's boorish conduct toward the Holy See delegation may have set something of a record for a UN committee chairman, but his anti-Vatican bias was hardly original in substance. At an earlier UN session, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway had complained bitterly of obstacles placed in the Cairo conference's path by a "small state with no natural inhabitants.")

It was no surprise, then, that Prep-Com III produced a truly radical draft document for the Cairo conference, in which only six of 118 pages were devoted to the conference's ostensible topic of "population and development," with the bulk of the rest given over to proposals for a lifestyle revolution of awesome proportions.

Not that the classic population controllers did not do well at Prep-Com III. There was no serious challenge to the shibboleths of "overpopulation," and the controllers got a pledge of serious money, the draft document having committed the international community to a massive increase in funding for population control activities, up from the current $6 billion to $17 billion by 2000. (The increase was to be paid for by increased American, Japanese, and Scandinavian contributions to the UN Fund for Population Activities [UNFPA], as well as by cutbacks in UN-sponsored education, health care, industrial development, and disaster relief.)

Still, it was the philosophical shift embedded in the Cairo draft document that marked a sea change in the debate. For the draft document's view of the human condition and the human prospect was rooted in that concept of the radically autonomous individual with which Americans have become all too familiar through the sexual revolution, the deconstructionist decay of the American academy, and the philosophical musings of several Supreme Court justices. "Choice," the mantra of U.S. proponents of abortion-on-demand (along with "gay rights," "alternative forms of marriage," and all the rest of it), became the antiphon of the draft Cairo document

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produced by Prep-Com III. The results, to put it gently, were striking.

"Marriage" was the dog that didn't bark in the Cairo draft document. In fact, the only time the word "marriage" appeared in the draft document's chapter on "the family" was in a passage deploring "coercion and discrimination in policies and practices related to marriage." But this was hardly surprising, in that the draft document, while frequently noting the importance of "the family in its various forms," said absolutely nothing about the importance of families rooted in stable marriages for the physical and mental well-being of children. Nor did the draft document have much else to say about the natural and moral bond between parents and children and its importance for achieving many of the document's laudable goals, such as improved health care and education for youngsters. Indeed, the document sundered the moral relationship between parents and teenage children by treating sexual activity after puberty as a "right" to be exercised at will, and by suggesting that state population and "reproductive health care" agencies be the primary interlocutors of young men and women coming to grips with their sexuality.

The Cairo draft document also proposed establishing a new category of internationally recognized human rights, viz., "reproductive rights," of which the right to abortion-on-demand was, not surprisingly, the centerpiece. Indeed, it seemed at times as if the codification of an internationally recognized (and, presumably, enforced) "right to abortion" was the primary goal of the Clinton Administration for Cairo. Shortly before Prep-Com III, on March 16, 1994, Secretary of State Warren Christopher had sent a cable to all U.S. diplomatic stations abroad, stating that "the U.S. believes that access to safe, legal, and voluntary abortion is a fundamental right of all women," and emphasizing that the U.S. objective at Cairo was to get "stronger language on the importance" of "abortion services" into the conference final report. Christopher's cable, for all its ignorance of the state of the abortion debate in the U.S., at least had the merit of intelligibility; the draft Cairo document followed the familiar UN pattern of Orwellian euphemism, in which coercive family planning policies became "fertility regulation," and abortion-on-demand was transmuted into "safe motherhood" and "reproductive rights."

In a contradiction familiar to U.S. veterans of the abortion wars, the Cairo draft document then married the philosophy of the imperial autonomous self to a program of large-scale state coercion in the service of "reproductive rights," "gender equity," and, of course, population control. Further, the draft document mandated states to override parental prerogatives (known, in UN-speak, as "social barriers to sexual and reproductive health information and care") in the matter of adolescent sexual education. The draft document also called for state intrusion into the doctor-patient relationship: after warning that "health care providers" must not "restrict the access of adolescents to the services and information they need," the document required states to ensure that those "providers" have the proper "attitudes" toward their teenage patients. One need not doubt that the "attitudes" to be enforced here were those of Dr. Joycelyn Elders. (Undersecretary Wirth seemed particularly exercised on the subject of teenage sexuality. At the conclusion of one session with a senior Vatican official prior to the Cairo conference, Wirth is said to have summed up his case in these pellucid terms: "Young people have to know about their bodies.")

The draft document produced by Prep-Com III also had a nasty totalitarian edge to it. In a striking passage that reflected the affinity between the *Kultur* of Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, and Linda Bloodworth-Thomasson, on the one hand, and the agenda of Bella Abzug and International Planned Parenthood, on the other, governments were instructed to "use the entertainment media, including radio and television soap operas and drama, folk theater, and other traditional media" to proselytize for the draft document's ideology and "program of action." And in order to insure that the usual male reprobates got the word, the draft document instructed governments to get the message of "reproductive rights" and "gender equity" out by instituting programs that "reach men in their workplaces, at home, and where they gather for recreation," while adolescent boys should be "reached through schools, youth organizations, or wherever they congregate." In sum, there was to be no area of life—home, workplace, gym, ballpark—into which state-sponsored propaganda on "reproductive rights and reproductive health" did not intrude.

Those of us who had thought that this approach to public policy had been consigned to the trash heap of history in 1989 had evidently been mistaken.

III

Given their success at Prep-Com III, the smugness and even arrogance displayed by the UN and Clinton Administration planners of the Cairo conference was, if not exactly admirable, quite understandable. They seemed to have perfected a modus operandi that would enable them to steamroller Cairo in the same way (an expectation that was doubtless further enhanced by the fact that more than sixty representatives of International Planned Parenthood would be coming to Cairo as official delegates from many countries). Not only would Cairo "go beyond Mexico City"; it would adopt the radicals' lifestyle agenda without too much fuss and bother. Critics like the Holy See could easily be

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brushed aside, as they had been in New York.

Yet even before the Cairo conference convened on Labor Day 1994, some cracks in the coalition that the conference planners were counting on began to show. In the United States—and most especially in the higher altitudes of the Clinton Administration—it is simply assumed that the "empowerment of women," abortion-on-demand, the libertine mores of the sexual revolution, and government propaganda (even coercion) on family planning go hand-in-glove. However, that is not necessarily the way things work in other parts of the world, or even, for that matter, among the truly radical radicals in the West. Thus, in the wake of Prep-Com III, certain feminist organizations, of a far more belligerent kidney than, say, the National Organization for Women, began planning mock trials, to take place in Cairo, of the World Bank, International Planned Parenthood, and the UNFPA, charging them with oppressing women through coercive governmental birth control programs. As it was to turn out, the feminist *sans-culotterie* could not win; but they were harbingers of an unanticipated irony in the outcome of the conference.

In any case, the most consequential thing that the planners of the Cairo conference had failed to take into account was the moral power of Pope John Paul II. That the Cairo conference did not adopt, but in fact rejected, key aspects of its planners' agenda was the result of a variety of factors: nervousness in Latin America, resistance from Islamic societies, and resentment in certain African countries of what they saw as Western cultural imperialism. But the sine qua non of the defeat suffered by the international advocates of the sexual revolution was the public campaign of opposition to the Cairo draft document mounted throughout the summer of 1994 by John Paul II.

This was not a voluble campaign; in its public (as distinguished from private, i.e., diplomatic) dimension, it consisted of a series of twelve ten-minute reflections that the Pope offered at his public audiences during June, July, and August 1994. But by identifying the fundamental ethical errors of the draft document's approach, and by defining a compelling moral alternative to UN-sponsored libertinism, John Paul II set in motion a resistance movement with considerable potency.

In these reflections, the Pope emphasized that the right to life is the basic human right, "written in human nature," and the foundation of any meaningful scheme of "human rights"; spoke of the family as the "primary cell" of society and as a "natural institution" with rights that any just state must respect; defined marriage "as a stable union of a man and a woman who are committed to the reciprocal gift of self and open to creating new life, [which] is not only a Christian value, but an original value of creation"; defended the equal human dignity of women, insisted that women must not be reduced to being objects of male pleasure, and argued that "perfection for woman is not to be like man, making herself masculine to the point of losing her specific qualities as a woman"; noted that sexuality has a "language of its own at the service of love and cannot be lived at the purely instinctual level"; argued that stable marriages were essential for the welfare of children; pointed out that the Church does not support an "ideology of fertility at all costs," but rather proposes a marital ethic in which the decision "whether or not to have a child" is not "motivated by selfishness or carelessness, but by a prudent, conscious generosity that weighs the possibilities and circumstances, and especially gives priority to the welfare of the unborn child"; rejected coercive or "authoritarian" family planning programs as a violation of the married couple's basic human rights and argued that the foundations of justice in a state are undermined when it does not recognize the unborn child's moral claim to protection; declared that discrimination against women in "workplace, culture, and politics" must be eliminated in the name of an "authentic emancipation" that does not "deprive woman herself of what is primarily or exclusively hers"; and argued that radical individualism is inhuman, as is a "sexuality apart from ethical references."

Throughout the summer of 1994, Undersecretary Wirth continued to insist that "we have no fight with the Vatican." Nonetheless, an argument of considerable amperage had clearly been engaged. In the wake of the confrontation with the Holy See's delegation at Prep-Com III, Wirth himself began a tour of the American hierarchy, focusing on the resident U.S. cardinals. It would not be unrealistic to suggest that in addition to explaining the Administration's position, the Undersecretary was searching for a weak link in the chain of American Catholic episcopal support for John Paul II and the Holy See. He did not find it. Instead, a letter to President Clinton from the then six resident U.S. cardinals (Hickey of Washington, Bernardin of Chicago, Law of Boston, O'Connor of New York, Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, Mahony of Los Angeles), joined as a co-signatory by the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), Archbishop William H. Keeler of Baltimore, was hand-delivered to the White House. The letter expressed the prelates' grave concern over "your Administration's promotion of abortion, contraception, sterilization, and the redefinition of the family" and urged the President to reverse the Administration's "destructive" agenda for Cairo. In addition, the NCCB unanimously adopted a statement in which the bishops, as "religious leaders and as U.S. citizens," declared themselves "outraged that our government is leading the effort to foster global acceptance of abortion." And lest it be thought that worries over Cairo were exclusively Catholic, it

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should be noted that eleven evangelical leaders, including Charles Colson, James Dobson, Charles Swindoll, Billy Melvin, and Bill Bright, cosigned a letter of their own urging the President "not to make the United States an exporter of violence and death."

By the end of the summer, the Pope's decisive clarification of the moral issues at stake in Cairo had not only put the impending conference on the front pages of the prestige press, it had also had a powerful political effect. Undersecretary Wirth, by now a somewhat improbable figure, continued to plead, against all the evidence, that the Administration had "no fight with the Vatican." But his superiors evidently disagreed, and were even more evidently worried; for on August 25, Vice President Al Gore, who was to lead the U.S. delegation in the early days of the Cairo conference, gave a speech at the National Press Club in Washington in which he stated that "the U.S. has not sought, does not seek, and will not seek to establish any international right to abortion." Any attempt to suggest otherwise was a "red herring." Yet, as the Holy See's press spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, pointed out at a press conference in Rome a few days later, Gore's statement did not square with the draft document, whose definition of "reproductive health care" as including "pregnancy termination" had been a U.S. initiative. (Navarro-Valls, in what was perhaps an exercise of charity, did not point out that Gore's Press Club speech was also inconsistent with the Christopher cable of March 16, with the Administration's domestic policy, and with its foreign aid programs.)

There is some reason to believe that the Vice President was misinformed, rather than deliberately disingenuous, on these matters. And no doubt the Vice President was genuinely concerned about charges of administration anti-Catholicism, reignited when a Reuters story of August 19 quoted Faith Mitchell, the State Department's population coordinator, as blaming Vatican disagreement with the Cairo draft document on "the fact that the conference is really calling for a new role for women, calling for girls' education and improving the status of women."* But whatever else it clarified or obscured, the Gore/Navarro-Valls exchange made it unmistakably clear that a great battle loomed in Cairo, where the "private sector advisers" to the U.S. delegation included Pamela Maraldo, president of Planned Parenthood of America and, in what the Administration may inexplicably have thought was a concession to religious concerns, the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of Churches.

Perhaps the less ideological and more politically astute members of the U.S. delegation hoped that the moral issues could somehow be finessed. But on the very first day of the conference, any such hopes were dashed: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan—unmistakably a woman, unmistakably Harvard-educated, and unmistakably a major political figure—took to the rostrum, defended the "sanctity of life" on religious grounds, and condemned the Cairo draft document for trying to "impose adultery, sex education . . . and abortion" on all countries. Predictably, the media gave more attention to distaff Norwegian prime minister Brundtland's defense of "choice" as the essence of the moral issue of abortion. But Bhutto's impassioned rejection of abortion-on-demand, featured on page one of both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and accompanied by pictures of the Pakistani and Norwegian leaders, easily won the battle of feminist iconography—and should have rebutted, once and for all, the charge that the Vatican was holding up consensus on the Cairo document for narrow sectarian reasons.

The opening day statements were followed by five days of negotiating impasse on the document's abortion language, its discussion of the family, and its approach to adolescent sexuality. During that first week, anti-Catholic sentiment and decidedly undiplomatic criticism of the Holy See were freely vented by NGO activists and official delegates alike. Nicolaas Biegman, the Dutch conference vice chairman, complained after four days that "all we read [about] is abortion, abortion, abortion. I deeply regret it. I think it's a pity." Columbia University's Allan Rosenfield, who represented the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, opined that "the Catholic women of the world do not buy into statements from the elderly celibate clergy." Another expert in ecclesiology, Alexander Sanger, president of Planned Parenthood of New York City, told the *New York Times* that "there are two churches, one where the hierarchy talks to the presidents of countries, and then there's the church of the people. The people are picking and choosing what parts of Catholicism they want to carry over to their personal lives." Colombia's Miguel Trias, who heads a government-sponsored family planning organization, fretted that "these Latin American countries are trying to make the Vatican happy. But in 2,000 years the Vatican has never been happy."

Nor was this kind of unpleasantness limited to press conferences. Gail Quinn, a member of the Holy See delegation and executive director of the U.S. bishops' Pro-Life Secretariat, was booed and hissed in a formal session of the conference when she rose to explain the Vatican's objections to some abortion language in the proposed final report; the delegate from Benin had to admonish the chair, the ubiquitous Dr. Sai, that free speech was supposed to be sacrosanct in UN deliberations. Later, while walking

*In the same Reuters report in which Ms. Mitchell suggested that the Church wanted to deny women an education, State Department spokesman Mike McCurry warned the Vatican against negotiating with Iran. A week later, in Cairo, American delegates were seen openly negotiating compromise language on abortion and "reproductive rights" with Iranian delegates.

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past two American representatives in a "delegates-only" area of the conference Center, Quinn heard one of the Americans say to another, in a deliberately audible stage whisper, "There goes that bitch."

All of which should have suggested, at least to the knowledgeable, that the Holy See's delegation was having a considerable impact at Cairo. As, indeed, it was. For contrary to reports in the *Times* and elsewhere that the Holy See had suffered a significant setback, by the end of the first week of the Cairo conference, the Vatican had in fact achieved a great deal. The final report now stated, unambiguously, that "in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning." The notion of enshrining abortion-on-demand as an internationally recognized basic human right—the centerpiece of the Wirth approach to Cairo—had been abandoned by its proponents, who tacitly conceded that there was no international consensus supporting the claim. The rights and responsibilities of parents in respect of their teenage children had been reaffirmed, and the worst of the euphemistic language about the structure of the family had been changed, so that the Cairo document could not credibly be appealed to on behalf of "gay marriage" and other innovations.

The last major sticking point involved the "safety" of abortions—an important question for the Holy See, which believes that no abortion can be "safe" since, by definition, it results in the death of an innocent human being. The language in dispute stated that "in circumstances where abortion is legal, such abortion should be safe." At the level of moral principle, this was clearly unacceptable to the Vatican, being as it was the equivalent of saying that "in circumstances where female circumcision is legal, it should be performed with novocaine." The language was finally altered to read, "in circumstances where abortion is not against the law, such abortion should be safe"—on the surface a minor change, but one that holds out the prospect of legal reform and that does not concede the rectitude of permissive abortion laws.

The *New York Times* insisted on reporting these debates as a matter of "the Vatican and its few remaining allies" obstructing the course of human progress. But there were other dynamics at work at Cairo, as at Budapest and Mexico City, and it seemed possible that they could frustrate the more ambitious plans of both population controllers and lifestyle radicals in the future. The controllers' agenda (one of whose historic roots is, frankly, a set of eugenic phobias about "those kind of people") continues to cause serious concern in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, where political leaders understand that it is their populations, not that of, say, Norway, which are to be brought "under control." The resistance of Islamic, Latin American, and some African countries to the libertinism enshrined in the Cairo draft document was also of significance for the future. One need not admire many aspects of life in those societies to applaud their recognition that the sexual revolution's promises of a permissive cornucopia (in Zbigniew Brzezinski's telling phrase) are a snare and a delusion. And, as that recognition becomes increasingly widespread in an America struggling with unprecedented levels of illegitimacy, welfare dependency, and spousal and child abuse, we may also see a dramatic change in our domestic politics. For as the Clinton Administration's defeat at Cairo graphically illustrates, you cannot have it both ways: you cannot strengthen the family and the serious moral commitments necessary to sustain the family by treating the community of father, mother, and children as one option in a limitless menu of "lifestyle alternatives."

Over the long haul, though, the most significant development at the Cairo conference may have been that of a shift in controlling paradigms: from "population control" to "the empowerment of women." As one Indonesian delegate put it toward the end of the meeting, "We have stopped calling women the receptors of contraceptives. We now call them agents of change." Americans long familiar with the alliance between feminism and libertinism may instinctively regard this shift, with reason, as simply an amplification of the moral crisis of modernity. But at Cairo there were interesting suggestions that, in different cultural and historical contexts, the issue of "empowerment" may not cut the way it does in Western Europe and in some parts of the United States.

Benazir Bhutto's speech was one example of that intriguing possibility. For Bhutto's very presence at Cairo, coupled with the content of her remarks, posed a sharp question: why should the "empowerment of women" be *necessarily* linked to the codification in international law (and national statutes) of the sexual revolution? Who says "A" does not *necessarily* have to say "B"—at least in non-Western cultures and traditional societies. (Indeed, it is worth remembering that American and Western European pro-life feminists, the vast majority of whom are deeply committed Christians, have resolutely declined to say "B.") Perhaps the question can be pressed even further, though: in the developing world, why shouldn't "the empowerment of women"—meaning that women should be educated, healthy, and no longer treated as property for purposes of marriage—serve to strengthen the roles of women as wives, mothers, and primary educators of their children? Might "the empowerment of women," in cultures whose women would regard Bella Abzug and Pamela Maraldo as something like aliens from Alpha Centauri, lead to a revitalization of the traditional family and a reaffirmation of the distinctively maternal power of women?

Joan Dunlop, president of the International Women's Health Coalition, found it "really extraordinary that in an international UN forum we are

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talking about sexual and reproductive health and the empowerment of women. These are things that many people of different cultures can understand." Indeed. But the question is, *how*? The travail of the conference translators at Cairo suggests the volatility of this "empowerment" language (and the rest of the armamentarium of fem-speak) and the difficulty of predicting precisely how it will shape lives in radically different societies and cultures.

French translators had to resuscitate a nineteenth-century term (*sante genesique*) in the effort to render "reproductive health" in their language. "Family leave" had almost everybody but the Americans stumped; the Arabic translation refers to parents leaving each other after a birth, while the Russian translation spoke of the entire family taking a vacation together. The Chinese thought "sexual exploitation" was an easy one, for they could rely on Chairman Mao's critique of capitalists. (They could also have used his doctor's memoirs, in which the chairman is remembered as an unregenerate sexual predator who ingested ground elks' horns as an antidote to impotence.) But the Arabs were caught between American buzz words and their own religious sensibilities. "Sexually active unmarried individuals"—who are committing criminal acts under Islamic law—thus became "sexually active as-yet-to-be married individuals." The Russians couldn't figure out how to translate "unwanted pregnancies" so that the phrase did not denote "undesirable pregnancies"; and that was relatively mild, compared to the Russian translation of "reproductive health," which comes out as "health that reproduces itself again and again" (the Arabic cuts even closer to the bone of the abortion issue, as "reproductive health" becomes "health concerning the begetting of children").

One veteran population activist, Jason Finkle of the University of Michigan, worried that "all kinds of things have now been packed into the trunk of population: women's and children's health, female literacy, women's labor rights. I'm fearful that we've gotten away from the focus on population size and growth." It does not seem, after Cairo, an entirely unreasonable expectation. But some will regard this as something less to be feared than to be—very cautiously—celebrated.

IV

Some things that ought to have happened at Cairo didn't. There was no concerted challenge to the ideologically charged concept of "overpopulation," although the work of Nicholas Eberstadt, Julian Simon, Karl Zinsmeister, and others has made clear that the term itself has no credible scientific meaning. This intellectual failure, combined with the clash of moral visions at Cairo, produced a somewhat schizoid final document, which endorses voluntary measures of population control but then sets population targets whose achievement would seem to require coercive governmental intervention in family planning. The resolution of that tension will, over the next decade, tell us much about the future of population policy (and politics) at both the international and national levels.

The conference also failed to confront the UN's continuing fixation on Third World development as essentially a matter of massive resource transfers from the developed to the developing world. The Holy See did heroic work at Cairo, and in the months between Prep-Com III and the September conference. But it would have added even more to the debate had its representatives taken up the question of governmental criminality and its relationship to the despoilation of the Third World; materials for such a challenge were ready to hand in the 1987 encyclical of John Paul II, *Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, in which the Pope had urged developing nations to "reform certain unjust structures, and in particular their political institutions, in order to replace corrupt, dictatorial, and authoritarian governments with democratic and participatory ones." The Holy See might also have taken a leaf from John Paul's 1991 social encyclical *Centesimus Annus* and boldly urged the view that human beings are the basic resource for development, because the source of wealth in the modern world is human creativity.

At the grassroots level, it will be a while before the paradigm shift from "population control" to "empowerment of women" takes effect. Meanwhile, huge amounts of money will continue to be poured into family planning programs, many of which are either subtly or overtly coercive. Remedial action on this front will require extreme vigilance over foreign aid budgets, and careful attention will have to be paid to the Clinton Administration as it tries to square its adherence to an international agreement that flatly rejects abortion as a means of family planning with its commitment to huge increases in U.S. aid funding to organizations that actively promote precisely that evil.

So the Battle of Cairo will continue, in other venues. And it will remain, at bottom, a moral struggle: about the dignity and value of human beings, about the rights and responsibilities of women and men, about the relationship between marriage, sexuality, and the rearing of children. Thanks to John Paul II's refusal to concede the Holy See's irrelevance in accordance with the prepared media script, the unavoidable moral core of the population argument was forced onto center stage at Cairo. And there it became clear, to those with eyes to see, that the mores of Hollywood, Manhattan's Upper West Side, and Copenhagen are not universally shared, admired, or sought.

That, in itself, was no mean accomplishment. And it might, just might, presage a more morally and empirically serious population and development debate in the future. FT

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Go(o)d in Iris Murdoch

Alan Jacobs

Recently the Divinity School at the University of Chicago sponsored a conference to investigate and celebrate the theological importance of the writings, especially the novels, of Iris Murdoch. The attitude expressed by many of the theologians involved was one of abject, almost pathetic, gratitude to Murdoch for taking religion seriously—not many noted artists do so, after all, nor, come to think of it, do all of the theologians themselves. Confronted with the spectacle of these highly trained men and women genuflecting in the direction of a novelist, however brilliant, one struggles to recall that theology was once named Queen of the Sciences.

Yet if any contemporary writer, in the English-speaking world anyway, deserves this kind of attention it is Iris Murdoch. Until her retirement a few years ago, she taught philosophy at St. Anne's College, Oxford, and her five philosophical books would by themselves add up to a pretty substantial career. But her reputation rests chiefly on her twenty-five novels, which collectively constitute one of the more impressive bodies of fiction produced in English in this century. Interestingly, her most ambitious—and, I would argue, most successful—work in both fields has been produced in the last decade, which is to say, well after her sixtieth birthday. She is now seventy-five, and continues to turn out complex, challenging, and lengthy novels at the rate of about one every other year—though she seems, unaccountably, to have broken stride momentarily in order to publish, two years ago, a substantial expansion and revision of her 1982 Gifford Lectures under the title *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (my copy of which weighs in at 520 pages). But when *The Green Knight*, her most recent novel (and at 472 pages her briefest in more than a decade), appeared in Great Britain in 1993 it became clear that the completion of *Metaphysics* had scarcely exhausted her energy.

In these two most recent books, Murdoch seems to be reaching, perhaps not a culmination of her work (who knows how many more books she will produce), but a clarification and focus of its key themes. She seems to be expressing her philosophy more directly and forcefully than ever, and connecting it with the whole range of her interests. And, though it may seem inappropriate to say so about so expansive a writer, it would seem that her focus is directed chiefly on a single question, one might even say a single letter, the letter "o": the presence or absence of that letter can determine the ground of our moral lives.

What I mean can be discovered in a sentence near the end of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*: "Good represents the reality of which God is the dream." Or: "We can lose God, but not Good." Murdoch is a Platonist, to a degree and with a purity almost unknown in modern thought: it is the Good that she seeks, the Idea or Form of the Good. (Platonist thought requires the frequent use of capital letters.) All else, including God, is an image or a substitute for this utter Good, and may be useful to us as we move toward perfection; but because our human tendency is to substitute the image for the reality, the guidepost for the destination, even the worship of God may distract us from our proper pursuit.

Murdoch is convinced that each of us pursues the Good according to our understanding of it; evil, in her thinking, is little more than the natural consequence of misinformation about or a misconception of the Good. As such it gets little attention in her writings: a consideration of the view that people are evil and human life miserable takes up but one part of the shortest chapter in *Metaphysics*, and most of the characters in her novels are basically decent people who are rather puzzled when they come upon

Alan Jacobs, *whose "The Second Coming of C. S. Lewis" appeared in our November 1994 issue, teaches in the Department of English at Wheaton College.*

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what appears to be evil. In *The Green Knight* even a murderer seems more confused than malicious. (He is a scholar whose remarkable intellectual integrity suggests that he has simply failed to extend the morality he exhibits in one activity to the rest of his life.) The prototypical Murdoch character is young Edward Baltram in *The Good Apprentice* (1986). Edward surreptitiously, jokingly, gives a friend a dose of LSD, and when the friend in mid-trip leaps or falls from a high window to his death, Edward, overwhelmed by guilt, begins to seek some understanding of his experience, some moral or spiritual categories within which it can be comprehended, perhaps even some kind of redemption. On the last page he and his stepbrother (whose quest for a moral life gives the book its title) and stepfather drink to "all the good things in the world," though they admit not being sure what those things are. They drink, one might say, to an unknown Good.

Perhaps this one example is sufficient to indicate that Murdoch takes the moral life more seriously than almost any other well-known contemporary novelist, and, moreover, that the virtues and shortcomings of her work are tightly interwoven. Her insistence that a good life is possible, and that many people actively pursue it, including those who don't know that they are doing so, marks a fresh and exciting alternative to the more common themes of today's "serious" fiction: detailed accounts of adultery in the suburbs, or of the mental worlds of serial killers, or of the contents of a kitchen cabinet in a trailer home in rural Missouri. But in order to make the pursuit of goodness seem both attractive and possible, Murdoch tends to avoid raising hard questions about those who quite evidently aren't interested in goodness, or those who fight with little success against their evil impulses. As a Christian I would say that the great lack in Murdoch's moral philosophy is an adequate concept of the *will*. Augustine's *Confessions* turns up from time to time in *Metaphysics*, but any hope that she might at some point consider the philosophy of will elaborated there is disappointed. Her only reference to it merely notes that Augustine "pictures will as a blend of intellect and feeling."

Nevertheless she does understand as well as any modern novelist just how complicated our moral lives can be, which is perhaps why she tends to write big novels, since their open and expansive form can make room for complexity and for a certain quite realistic lack of coherence. In one particularly stimulating chapter of *Metaphysics* she questions the preeminent position of tragedy among literary genres: "If it must be a play, is it not necessarily too short and simple?"

Moreover, doesn't the association of tragedy with death enforce a certain too-neat closure? Murdoch suggests that *King Lear* would be a still more powerful—indeed, perhaps unbearable—play if Lear did not die at the end, but was forced to go on living with his crushing burden of knowledge and guilt. (This is of course what does happen to Oedipus at the end of Sophocles' first play about him.) Murdoch suspects the Aristotelian doctrine of catharsis on the ground that a play which obeys it settles too many issues and closes too many emotional doors. More generally, referring to philosphy as well as art, she says that "the achievement of coherence is itself ambiguous. Coherence is not necessarily good, and one must question its cost. Better sometimes to remain confused." By contrast she praises the novel because "in the traditional novel the people, the story, the innumerable kinds of value judgments both illuminate and celebrate life, and are judged and placed by life, in a reciprocal process. We read great novels with all our knowledge of life engaged, the experience is cognitive and moral in the highest degree." Such experience is also too diversified to be fully coherent.

One is not wholly comfortable with Murdoch's suspicion of coherence; it links up too readily with her resistance to stopping the pursuit of the Good with Jesus or Yahweh or Allah. The traditional believer is not confused about the object of his or her worship, which is in Murdoch's view often unfortunate. But her willingness to tolerate confusion is nonetheless valuable for its recognition that the moral life cannot be reduced to rule-governed behavior. Not that she is against moral rules; they are, she argues convincingly, an "indispensable," if insufficient, part of the moral life.

Especially interesting in this regard is her rehabilitation of the Kantian notion of duty, so scorned by many modern moral philosophers for "imposing" a supposedly external or, to use Paul Tillich's word, "heteronomous," standard upon the moral agent. "A realistic view of morality cannot dispense with the idea," she argues; "duty is for most people the most obvious form of moral experience." It is where moral neophytes—a category that includes but is not confined to children—find their starting point. As one grows morally and spiritually, one moves toward a more natural selflessness; but "meanwhile requirements and claims . . . demand to be met." And it is good for all concerned that we acknowledge and meet those demands.

This position, admirable in itself, Murdoch puts to some troubling uses. Rules, structures, and duties, along with symbols, rites, even gods and all other objects of worship—in short, all given forms of the religious life—are in her view useful primarily as training wheels, to be replaced or removed when the rider no longer needs them. Thus she tends to portray characters who begin their moral quests by seeking a place within the structures of more-or-less traditional religious belief. Bellamy James in *The Green Knight*, for instance, finds a cloistered priest to serve as his spiritual advisor, and seeks to live a monastic

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life in the world, hoping that ascetic discipline will give him a clearer vision of Christ. But such characters are not allowed to find lasting satisfaction within those structures: internal and external circumstances tend to force them into more individualistic and amorphous modes of religious experience. Bellamy's spiritual advisor seems to be speaking for Murdoch when he leaves the Church and tells Bellamy to "remember Eckhart's advice (for which he was deemed a heretic): do not seek for God outside your own soul." He also says, "You should stay with Christ, that presence need not fade, it can be an icon"—but of course this is a significant demotion, from Savior to mere sign or token of an impersonal and unrepresentable Good. In one of the two dialogues in her book *Acastos*, Socrates tells a young man that if he prays to whatever God he knows, he will be answered. Yet it is clear that she also believes that, if one is not spiritually stagnant, any God will eventually cease to answer, at which point one must move on to higher and better things.

The French statesman Georges Clemenceau famously remarked that he would disown his son if the young man were not a Communist at age twenty, and would do the same if he were still a Communist at age thirty. Murdoch seems to have the same attitude toward adherence to traditional forms of religion: admirable and necessary in a moral beginner, unforgivable in a morally mature person. It is this conviction that lies behind her claim that she is a Christian Buddhist, or Buddhist Christian: she envisions a Christianity in which Jesus plays the same role that Buddha does in the more sophisticated forms of Buddhism, that of (at most) an avatar of a transcendent Good that he cannot exhaust or even adequately represent.

This should not be confused with what has often been called "ethical Christianity." Murdoch repeatedly insists that morality, as commonly conceived, is not self-supporting. She rejects the liberal humanistic tradition according to which morality itself can be the ground of a good life; to the contrary, she argues, morality itself must be grounded in religious commitment. Religion, as Murdoch defines it, demands more of us than any mere morality can; it requires our unswerving allegiance, its claims upon us are absolute. In this sense, while the desire to be good or to be a better person may be a merely moral project, the pursuit of the Good is genuinely religious. The true encounter with Christ (or the Buddha, or whomever) will be a mystical vision of the Good that shines through him, not a simple acknowledgment of his ethical superiority and the value of following his example.

Still, the religion Murdoch envisions—as many of her characters come to believe, as Socrates preaches in *Acastos*, and as Murdoch herself repeatedly argues in *Metaphysics*—is necessarily, for reasons that by now should be obvious, a religion without gods. Not only *can* we lose God, but if we are to retain Good, at some point we *must* lose God. "The 'demythologization' of religion is something absolutely necessary in this age." Moreover, the abandonment of the "old dogmatic literalistic myths" may well, she thinks, be going on right now in churches around the world without anybody noticing. This process can happen silently because "a Christian who loses belief in God and resurrection and immortality, while remaining religious, is not necessarily making a radical change in his value world."

Murdoch is aware that some people will doubt that the transformation she recommends is so simple:

> Can one simply decree this sort of status for the risen Christ and still keep a Christian structure and observance as before, as if it did not matter all that much? The transformation of Christianity into a religion *like* Buddhism, with no God and no literally divine Christ, but with a mystical Christ, may be, if possible at all, a long task. . . . Or could an individual perhaps one day decide to "look at it in this way"? Do not people so decide? And suppose a good many of them do? Is one being too rigid and solemn about it all? Do not a large number of those who go to church already think in a new nonliteral way without bothering about theology and metaphysics?

This, it seems to me, is wishful thinking. Even the most superficial investigation of the demographic data reveals that, while most Christians would agree that they care little for theology or metaphysics, those who actually go to church on a regular basis (and this is as true in Great Britain as it is in North America) tend to believe pretty literally in the creeds they recite each Sunday. Those who do not tend eventually to stop going to church altogether, finding the Sunday *New York Times*—that "parish magazine of self-congratulatory liberal enlightenment," as Alasdair MacIntyre has so vividly called it—a less demanding way to meet their spiritual needs.

One may deplore or applaud this tendency, but one cannot simply ignore its existence, or assert its opposite. Murdoch is quite singular in her assumption that the structures of religion are of greater importance than the beliefs that have historically generated and then undergirded those structures. It may seem obvious to her that, in British Christianity, the abandonment of a belief in a personal God would be of little significance, while the loss of the Authorized Version of the Bible and Cranmer's Prayer Book marks a religious disaster of the first magnitude; or that if "our minds are . . . full of readily available religious imagery . . . there is no need to expel [it] simply because . . . we do not believe in God." But it is difficult to imagine that others will find such notions

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equally obvious, or perhaps even comprehensible. And at times Murdoch acknowledges that those who believe that untrue ideas should simply be dispensed with have an argument worthy of consideration.

Religious forms and structures, then, are important to Murdoch for pragmatic reasons: they are pegs on which to hang spiritual experiences that might otherwise be too amorphous and indefinable to be made sense of. But the Good itself, well, that is another matter—isn't it? Surely Murdoch, as a self-proclaimed Platonist, believes in something like a "literal way" in the existence of the Good—doesn't she? One might so conclude, if one had read only the first five hundred or so pages of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. But right at the end she gives the game away.

There is a story Murdoch tells in this book, a Tibetan story:

> A mother asks her son, a merchant setting off for the city, to bring her back a religious relic. He forgets her request until he is nearly home again. He picks up a dog's tooth by the roadside and tells the old lady it is a relic of a saint. She places it in her chapel where it is venerated. It begins miraculously to glow with light.

On its first telling, this little tale illustrates a point about the role of stories in religion. It does not seem very important. But Murdoch returns to it several times, and finally, near the end of the book it suddenly appears to be something like the key to her whole philosophy:

> Keats says that "what the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth, whether it existed before or not." It *must* be *truth*. Simone Weil quotes Valéry: "The proper, unique, and perpetual object of thought is that which does not exist." Here we may make sense of the idea of loving good. "At its highest point, love is a determination to create the being which it has taken for its object." Here indeed we come back to the Ontological Proof in its simpler version, a proof by perfection, by a certainty derived from love. The good artist, the true lover, the dedicated thinker, the unselfish moral agent solving his problem: they can create the object of love. The dog's tooth, when sincerely venerated, glows with light.

Murdoch neatly escapes a recurrent dilemma of Platonism, which is to explain the mode of existence of the Good and of all the Forms, by denying that they have an existence at all independent of those who believe in them. The Good is not worshipped because it exists, but exists insofar as it is worshipped. It may, unlike God, be indispensable, but this indispensability is purely pragmatic and heuristic. We cannot live in the way we most want to live, or at least the way some of us want to live, without it. Murdoch's Good is what the poet Wallace Stevens called a "supreme fiction": a story, a metanarrative, by which we can direct our lives, and the origin of which is our own creative imagination. If, as Jean-François Lyotard has claimed, postmodernism may be defined in a phrase as "incredulity toward metanarratives," then Iris Murdoch (like Stevens) is a modernist; that is to say, one whose incredulity is limited to metanarratives written by others.

Many of the more curious features of Murdoch's novels become more comprehensible once one understands this belief that the Good is an imaginative creation: for instance, the seemingly minor yet recurrent instances of paranormal phenomena. In *The Philosopher's Pupil* (1983) a man's life is changed by his vision of a flying saucer; a key episode in *The Good Apprentice* turns on what appears to be the effects of a love potion; a young girl in *The Green Knight* exerts an involuntary telekinesis over the stones that she has collected in her room; in the same novel the goodness of a man named Peter Mir (Mir meaning, in Russian, both "world" and "peace," as several characters note) seems to be contagious, bringing sweet dreams and love to those with whom he comes in contact. But more questions are raised than answered. I will here note only three.

First, why do the various spiritual seekers of her novels tend to move in the same direction, that is, to conceive of or imagine goodness in roughly the same way? There may be several plausible answers to that question, but Murdoch doesn't give any.

Second—a point noted earlier—how are we to explain those people who do not seem to give a damn for the Good or for moral action in any form? Do they simply have deficient imaginations? Moreover, how should we respond to them? What kinds of arguments, if any, could we formulate that would call them to account for their behavior, and even to see the error of their ways? In *The Green Knight*, the good Peter Mir confronts the murderer, and seems to have no resources with which to bring about moral conviction in the man; their several conversations end in frustration and no closure is reached. At one point in *Metaphysics* Murdoch quotes, with apparent approval, Wittgenstein's claim that certain moral questions cannot be profitably discussed: "There are, indeed, things which cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical." But of course, there are many people to whom such "things" are obviously not manifest. What then?

The third question is the most important. Earlier I quoted Murdoch's claim that "the 'demythologization' of religion is something absolutely necessary in this age." Throughout the book she takes it for granted that the "old dogmatic literalistic myths" must go, indeed have gone; the only question is what "we" will replace them with. The recurrent use of the plural

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pronoun and her constant reference to traditional religion in the past tense—"should we let [the word 'God'] dwindle and go, together with the *person* whom it used to designate?"—are equally telling. That Murdoch feels qualified to speak for a "we" which presumably includes all of her readers is indicated by the fact that she offers neither a defense nor even an explanation for her determination to demythologize. To Murdoch it goes without saying that historic Christianity is not an option. Yet it does not seem likely that her audience is as uniform as all that; and even those readers who do not share this writer's commitment to traditional religion may still wonder whether, if we are going to create our own object of worship, the exchange of a personal, loving God for an impersonal, unresponsive Good is an appealing trade. Why—this is my third question—should anyone agree to such an exchange?

Insofar as Murdoch does answer this question, the answer is only implicit, and appears to be a pragmatic one. It is a matter of what "we" can bring ourselves to believe in. From time to time she notes that "we can no longer believe" in traditional Judaism or Christianity—that is, in the notion of a personal God, or a Savior who rose from the dead, or personal immortality in the familiar sense. This is a familiar sort of statement, yet it begs many, many questions. Many people do believe in these things; many people in the past did not. Many contemporary skeptics would find it easier to believe in a personal God than in "a Christ who . . . is to be found as a living force [only] within each human soul." If indeed Murdoch thinks her philosophy is for the modern person more "believable" than the historic religions, one needs to be convinced and not just told.

This is an important issue because Murdoch implicitly acknowledges from time to time that her Good is in many ways less appealing, less satisfying, than a personal God. Her nostalgia for the ancient Jewish and especially the Christian faith is palpable throughout *Metaphysics* and, albeit less directly, in many of her novels. "The charm, attraction, and in many ways deep effectiveness of faith in a personal God must constantly strike the critical or envious outsider." Of the Gospels she writes, contrasting them with the forceful rhetoric of Paul's letters, that they "are in a sense easy to read, can seem so (even I would think for a complete stranger to them), because they are the kind of great art where we feel: It is so." And that this is not a merely aesthetic reaction is indicated by these curiously ambivalent words, from the same page: "What happened immediately after Christ's death, how it all went on, how the Gospel writers and Paul became persuaded He had risen: this is one of the great mysteries of history. It is difficult to imagine any explanation in purely historical terms, though the unbeliever must assume there is one." The narratives of Christ's redemptive acts touch Murdoch because they reveal a God who, in the Apostle Paul's formulation, came to save us while we were yet sinners, before we had loved him. The Platonic Good can be, like the Jewish and Christian God, lovable; "however, God sees us and seeks us, Good does not."

That Murdoch cannot find a way to accept this God who sees and seeks (who redeems), but instead embraces an impersonal and probably fictional Good, makes it ironic—perhaps contradictory would not be too strong a word—that she would conclude her book with these words from Psalm 139 (in the Authorized Version, of course):

> Whither shall I go from thy spirit, whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

Ironic and contradictory, because each property here attributed by the psalmist to the Lord is that of a person, one whose love is active and (in the old word) prevenient. Murdoch concludes her long, confusing, and stimulating book by appealing to an image of the Ultimate that she has, overtly and firmly, if regretfully, abandoned.

The Gospel—and not just the Gospel, but the fundamental Judeo-Christian belief in a loving personal God—is, according to the apostle, "foolishness to the Greeks." We believers are fools. But Murdoch's rejection of God in favor of her supreme fiction, the Good, is worse than foolish, it is empty. Her interpolated "o" adds nothing; in the end it proves to be a zero. Another Fool may have understood, though his words seem harsh: he told his master Lear, "now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a Fool, thou art nothing." FT

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The Marriage of Your Choice

Christopher Wolfe

I've probably been hanging around Hadley Arkes too long. Hadley has a way of coming up with wonderful little pieces of proposed legislation whose main point is less the legislation itself than the principle it establishes or absence of sound principle it exposes. For example, he has proposed that legislation prohibiting abortions in the third trimester (after "viability") be introduced in Congress, in order to force pro-choice representatives to make arguments of some kind as to why such legislation should not pass. They surely would oppose it, but what could they give as a reason for doing so? Such a law might not save many lives in the short run—there are relatively few third-trimester abortions ("only" about 17,000 a year)—but it would be valuable because it would reveal more clearly and publicly the true foundations of the pro-choice position: radical autonomy, even to the point of destroying early, developing human life.

A similar kind of proposal has occurred to me. It's not a proposal that is likely to have much of a practical impact. I'm not even sure that it is one we should want to press for. But I think it would be interesting to put forward, in order to reveal more clearly and publicly something that many of us know is true, but that orthodox liberals would deny. This proposal concerns not abortion, but marriage.

The proposal is this: let us amend state marriage laws so as to make it *possible* for a man and a woman to choose freely to enter into an indissoluble marriage. Note: possible, not mandatory.

The details of such a law would have to be worked out. Perhaps, to minimize certain objections, it would have to be restricted to people who are at least twenty-one. Presumably, some grounds for legal declaration of the nullity of the marriage ab initio (annulments) would have to be maintained, though in a form that did not become a gaping loophole. (Admittedly, this might not be a simple task.) Indissolubility is, of course, completely compatible, in principle, with legal separation for cases in which the well-being (physical, financial, and otherwise) of a spouse is threatened by continued living together. But these practical issues aside, it is intriguing to speculate about the debate that might emerge from such a proposal.

CHRISTOPHER WOLFE *teaches political science at Marquette University and is President of the American Public Philosophy Institute.*

As the current legal order stands, *all* American marriages can be dissolved by divorce decrees. "No-fault" divorce legislation swept the country in the 1960s, and became law in all the states. It was based on the assumptions that (a) marriages involving irreconcilable differences ought not to be maintained compulsorily by the law, and (b) the harms of clogging up the courts with bitter divorce battles outweighed any benefits of requiring that divorce be based on some legally proven "fault" of one of the partners.

It is hard to know the extent to which the increased rate of divorce today is affected by the relative ease of legal divorce. That is, it is difficult to know whether no-fault divorce is a cause or merely a symptom. Of course, no one would contend that no-fault divorce is *the* cause of a high divorce rate; but it would certainly not be unreasonable to suppose that it is a significant contributing factor.

No-fault divorce legislation was, from one perspective, merely part of a larger cultural change that expanded personal autonomy, not merely in marriage laws, but in the area of sexuality generally (and more broadly as well). It is surely not the sole cause of declining family stability.

On the other hand, even if it is, to a considerable extent, an epiphenomenon of deeper cultural changes, once ensconced in the law, divorce becomes part of the "moral ecology" of our culture and shapes

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the attitudes and expectations of many citizens about marriage. The free terminability of marriage changes the definition of marriage, just as there is an essential difference between a contract terminable at will by either party and a contract terminable only after ten years. Such laws promote a certain *image* of marriage, with terminability as one of its features.

Of particular interest is the question of its impact on traditional communities within the nation that have principled commitments to different views of marriage. For example, Catholic parents can raise their children to understand divorce as a "legal fiction." They can tell their children that when they say that so-and-so is "divorced," they don't really mean that his or her marriage bond with the original spouse has been broken—that bond, after all, is unbreakable—but that our particular society (wrongly) regards it as having been broken.

But in the real world of raising children and of growing up in society, it is difficult to maintain this understanding. Children—somewhat understandably, I suppose—get annoyed if, every time they refer to a "divorced" person, they have to hear mom or dad trot out the homily: "Of course, they're not *really* divorced, because . . ." Nor can they themselves, when they are in normal conversation with their friends—many of whom are non-Catholics or "Americanized" Catholics who don't accept the Church's teaching on marriage—be expected to trot out the homily when there are references to divorce. Moreover, as they associate with more and more friends whose parents are divorced, whose "moms" or "dads" are not "really" their moms or dads, but their real mom's or dad's second spouse—and who may be very nice people, whom their friends regard as their genuine parents—it becomes harder to keep the distinction sharp. And so they end up absorbing from a society where there are frequent, casual references to and experiences of divorce, almost as if by osmosis, views antithetical to what Catholics believe to be the truth about marriage.

The intermediate position between the Catholic view and the secular liberal view is the "privatization" of our moral views: divorce—the fact that the marriage is ended, the bond broken—is subtly assumed to be a reality, but "we Catholics" don't do it. But, deprived of its foundation in "reality," such a view easily degenerates into the view that "no divorce" is a "rule" for Catholics. And once it becomes a "rule," it can easily be challenged as "moral absolutism," "uncompassionate," "rigid," and so on, and something subject to change. It is this process that probably explains why so many modern Catholics have come to accept divorce and remarriage.

I have spelled out this line of reasoning (less a matter of logic perhaps, than what might be called "socially conditioned" thinking) because of the likely liberal response to the proposal that American law permit indissoluble marriage. That response would go something like the following. "It is not true that American law is incompatible with indissoluble marriage. There is absolutely nothing to prevent two people who believe that marriage is indissoluble from getting married and staying married, fixed in their belief that divorce is a fiction. Our law simply declines to *compel* all people to enter indissoluble marriages, since many of us do not believe that marriages are indissoluble. The law is neutral, because it permits everyone to live consistently with his or her own beliefs on the subject."

There is a core of truth in this, of course. There is no reason, for example, why Catholics could not recognize that they live under two laws, a civil law and their own canon law, and treat the civil law on marriage, with its permission of divorce, as irrelevant to them.

My contention, however, is that the law is not neutral. In treating marriage as a contract revocable at the will of either party, the law adopts one of the competing views of marriage. It does not permit people to really *bind* themselves to a permanent and exclusive marriage, by reinforcing the personal commitment with the force of the law.

Yet some people might want to have that unbreakable, legally enforceable bond for themselves, on various grounds. It would provide very strong incentives for each person to make his or her own initial decision to marry carefully and reassure each person about the seriousness with which his or her prospective spouse makes that decision. It would provide similar incentives for each of them to exert the maximum effort to make the marriage work, and, again, reassure each one that his or her spouse has the same incentives. This could be viewed as one "strategy" for maximizing the likelihood of a successful marriage. Liberal divorce law not only rejects this strategy as a general one for all marriages—it rules it out *even for those who would freely choose it.*

One classic image of such a strategy is Ulysses and the Sirens. Ulysses knew the dangers of mariners following the beautiful voices of the Sirens and their ships being destroyed on the rocks, so he put wax in the ears of his men. Wanting to hear the voices himself, he left his own ears open, but, as a precaution, he had himself roped to the mast.

Similarly, knowing that the siren call of infidelity is one that human beings cannot systematically preclude themselves from ever hearing—though it can lead to disaster—some people might prefer to construct institutions that will prevent them from following those temptations when they occur. In short, they might choose not just to "commit" themselves to their spouses, but to "bind" themselves to their spouses. Why should they be precluded from adopting such a strategy?

The idea of permitting decisions involving lifelong commitments is one that liberals or "autono-

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mists" have a great deal of difficulty—I won't say accepting, but rather—tolerating. Why? Perhaps it would not be unfair to make the following comparison. Welfare state liberals today are often critical of the free market, because those who suffer in it (e.g., the unemployed) are immediately in view, while its advantages (because they are the result of indirect effects, especially in the form of incentives) tend to be seen only in the long run. Similarly, social liberals have a great deal of difficulty accepting restrictions on divorce, because those who suffer from such restrictions are immediately and easily observable, while the benefits of such restrictions (because they flow from indirect effects on incentives) are not as easily identifiable. The common element underlying the two views is misplaced—because it is based on excessively short-term views—compassion.

"But the law is neutral in a broader sense," someone might argue. "Its duty is to preserve personal freedom or autonomy, and genuine autonomy requires that a person always have the ability to change his or her mind." Perhaps the liberal apologist would draw a parallel between indissoluble marriage and a voluntarily made contract to enter a state of slavery: just as American law will not recognize a contract to enter into slavery—since it would constitute a giving up of the very freedom the law is intended to protect—so it will not enforce a contract to establish an indissoluble marriage, since that would restrict the freedom of the party to change his or her mind. A legal order protecting true autonomy is inconsistent with laws permitting the giving up of autonomy, even voluntarily.

I was told a story recently by a person who had a conversation with one of the Uniform Law Commissioners influential in the rise and triumph of no-fault divorce laws. The possibility of formulating the law with an "opt-out" provision for those who might prefer *not* having the option of no-fault divorce was raised, and drew the immediate response, "That would be against public policy."

What this makes clear is that liberal society is not neutral on the autonomous life (as "autonomy" is conceived by contemporary liberals). Traditional communities—such as groups of Catholics—within the larger political community that deny the absolute value of the autonomous life are put at a distinct disadvantage, as things stand, by American law. They are not permitted to make legally enforceable contracts binding themselves to abide by what they take to be the moral law. From one perspective, one might say that they are "forced to be free."

Another possible line of opposition to a law that would permit indissoluble marriages is quite different: indissoluble marriages are sometimes wrong, not because they violate the autonomy of the spouses, but because they harm third parties, namely the children of marriages where the partners have come to dislike each other so much that they create a pervasive atmosphere of mutual hostility deleterious to the well-being of the children. According to this line of reasoning, the state has an obligation not to permit indissoluble marriage contracts because of the possible harm to some children, in whom the state has an interest independent of the marriage itself.

But this case must actually be pressed much further than might appear at first glance. Freely chosen indissoluble marriage contracts would not be incompatible with decrees of legal separation. The fact that the marriage bond is held to be unbreakable is not inconsistent with an allowance, where extreme circumstances permit, of legal separation, either to protect the well-being and safety of one of the spouses themselves, or of the children. What it would prohibit, for those who choose indissoluble marriage, is legal remarriage.

Therefore the case for protecting third parties would have to be based on the contention that in some cases children would positively benefit from having one of their parents marry a new spouse. But this is a less compelling argument because it moves from something that is "necessary"—removing the children from circumstances that are positively harmful to them—to something that is "beneficial"—that the children be put in circumstances that are "better." But the state cannot be given the power to determine and enforce what is merely "better" for children. After all, if the argument were that the children would be better off with remarriage, that would seem to imply a ground for the state to *command* remarriage—an argument no one is likely to make.

Moreover, it is not difficult to raise serious questions, on the basis of contemporary social science research, about whether in the aggregate—that is, across all of society—children are better off under a regime of easy divorce than under a regime of indissoluble marriage (with legal separation available in extreme circumstances). Studies like Wallerstein and Kelly's *Surviving the Break-Up*, based on a long-term study of the effects of divorce on children—at the very least (and in spite of the authors' own commitments to the maintenance of divorce laws)—make it impossible to say with any certainty that children are better off in a society where divorce is easily obtainable. It is certainly true that some children suffer greatly under the influence of some bad marriages. But it is no less true that some children suffer terribly in cases of divorce, even of "bad" marriages.

Nor is it possible to measure the suffering occasioned by the additional divorces that occur in a regime that permits divorce, when such marriages might have been saved and made good in a regime that did not permit divorce. Nor—given that children of divorce are distinctly more likely themselves to have marriages ending in divorce—can we measure the extra suffering occasioned for the children

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involved in those additional divorces.

At the very least, it is not possible for liberals to take a stand on these intensely contestable questions, use that stand to ground a prohibition of indissoluble marriages, and then legitimately claim to be establishing a "neutral" legal framework for society. A law that does not at least *permit* indissoluble marriages cannot maintain a pretense of neutrality.

It is not only liberals who might oppose a law that permits indissoluble marriages. Those who fully accept the indissolubility of marriage might also do so. Their argument might take the following form. "It is true that marriage is indissoluble and that it is sad that American law does not reflect that truth (although that law may be unavoidable, given that the social mores would not support a law that made all marriages indissoluble). Nonetheless, a legal permission for some indissoluble marriage contracts would make things worse, because it would systematize the dissolubility of marriage more completely. As things stand, all marriages are technically dissoluble, given the availability of no-fault divorce, but the law still treats marriage as a single entity and most ordinary people still enter into marriage with a sense that they are doing so 'until death do us part.' By forcing people to choose between a specifically dissoluble and a specifically indissoluble marriage contract, the law may actually heighten many couples' sense of the dissolubility of their marriages. On the whole, then, such a law would make the situation even worse."

This argument is not without considerable force. It turns, in great measure, on exactly what the sense of most Americans entering marriage today is. Do most Americans consider their *own* marriages as "indissoluble" (irrespective of what laws they might favor)? If so, the case for not forcing people formally to choose between dissoluble and indissoluble marriage contracts is stronger.

But I tend to think that we would be deceiving ourselves if we viewed the current situation in that way. It is, unfortunately, easy to mistake a *hope* that marriage will last forever with a *belief* that it *necessarily* will. There is no evidence in our current society that genuinely indissoluble marriage has widespread support. Under these circumstances—an assessment that reflects a deeper disillusionment with contemporary American mores—worrying about whether the institution of marriage will be weakened by permitting indissoluble marriages seems rather farfetched.

And yet, paradoxically, it is the very strength of the ideal of marriage "till death do us part" that may be one of the most important reasons why this proposal is unlikely to be adopted in American law today.

The practical effect of a law permitting indissoluble marriages would be to create a two-tier system of marriages in this country: those that are dissoluble and those that are indissoluble. And such a two-tier system would offend democratic egalitarian sensibilities.

Why, you ask? Don't democracies tend to place a high value on personal liberty, and wouldn't such a law give people more freedom to choose which kind of marriage they want?

The underlying problem for the liberal is that the lover does not seek freedom, but union with the beloved. The lover wants the beloved to give love freely, but the lover may also want to bind himself or herself to the other and to give and receive a permanent and exclusive love. And the signs by which the lover binds himself or herself to the beloved are of enormous importance, especially given the vulnerability of one who gives himself or herself completely to another.

In the real world, how would romantic relationships be affected by the existence of two different kinds of marriage contracts, one dissoluble and the other indissoluble? Let's face it: while many people would opt for the dissoluble contract, because of their uncertainties about the vagaries of married love, many people (most? I doubt it, but who knows?) would regard the indissoluble contract as the expression of a fuller, more complete, more unconditional love. The other kind would be—in a colloquial phrase some kids use—"cheap-lousy."

It is almost amusing to imagine the dilemma confronted by the young lover trying to decide which form of marriage to propose to his beloved—and especially the tactfulness and imagination with which he would have to present his arguments for proposing marriage with a "bail-out" provision. ("When you get to know me better, you may discover that I am utterly unworthy of you, and far be it from me to lock you into a marriage with someone who will make you unhappy." Presumably the more romantic ones would avoid: "Who knows whether we'll be happy? Let's not take too big a chance.")

The very existence of an indissoluble marriage contract would be, for many, a sign of contradiction: an accusation to those unwilling to make the unconditional commitment, a kind of implied charge of "second-class" love. I doubt that a modern democratic society would permit such a distinction. It would prefer to prohibit the sign of a more unqualified love, in order to prevent the implication that other loves were lesser ones.

As I suggested above, I'm not entirely sure whether this proposal is worth acting on. I *am* convinced it is worth thinking about, and getting other people to think about: the ensuing discussion should make it clear that liberal law is distinctly *not* neutral on this subject; it is distinctly engaged in propagating its own moral views.

At the root of the liberal view is a certain vision of human nature. That vision says that people are too changeable, and the consequences of their changing

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too drastic, to permit unconditional commitments to other people. Those who would seriously commit themselves to an indissoluble marriage—indissoluble in a binding and legally enforceable way, not just as a personal ideal or goal—are making a mistake. They must be protected from the consequences of their own improvidence. At bottom, then, contemporary American divorce law is a version of liberal paternalism.

This, however, is paradoxical, for liberalism generally presents itself as opposed to paternalism: "People must be left free to make their own choices, as long as the bad effects of their actions fall upon themselves and not others. If they suffer the consequences of bad choices, then they and others will learn by what they suffer. When the consequences are irreparable, that is unfortunate, but it is not a decisive objection to such a policy." Advocates of paternalism frequently contend that the failure of people to live in certain ways will lead to irreparable consequences, so adoption of that proviso (i.e., no paternalism, except where the consequences are irreparable) would simply gut the antipaternalistic principle. As long as the decisions are made freely, and do not harm others, liberals hold that there is no reason for the law to prohibit them.

If liberals are right about paternalism, then the unfortunate experiences of those who freely choose the option of indissoluble marriage will be a salutary warning to others. Unfortunately, much liberal hostility to "paternalism," in the form of legal regulation of morals (obscenity, homosexual acts, etc.), is not really opposition to paternalism per se, but to the substantive notions of morality involved. That explains, for example, why so many liberals are perfectly at ease with mandatory seatbelt laws. They may justify their position with arguments about higher medical costs and insurance rates (perfectly reasonable arguments, it seems to me), but I can't help thinking that the real force behind mandatory seatbelt laws is much more traditional: i.e., something along the lines of, "It's just so *stupid* for people to put themselves in danger by not wearing seatbelts!" The desirability of avoiding death and serious physical injury seems so obvious that it is exempted from the usual liberal suspicion of regulating lifestyles when it comes to questions of morality.

The fact that all marriages are subject to legal nullification in our legal system cannot be explained by hostility to paternalism—though, of course, opposition to traditional marriage laws substantially restricting divorce for *all* people could be understood on such grounds. Paradoxically, the only explanation for the refusal of the law to *tolerate* indissoluble marriages is the opposite: the paternalism of liberal law itself.

The ideal of autonomy, an autonomy so broad as to preclude fixed, permanent, lifelong commitments, is the foundation for our contemporary marriage laws. It is a substantive moral ideal. And this moral ideal is incompatible with and hostile to the substantive moral ideal of marital fidelity that is embraced by certain traditional communities that from one perspective are "within" the American community and from another perspective are not: most notably, by Catholicism. That is why it is fair to say that there is a "culture war" going on in our society today and why contemporary liberalism's claim to be simply "a procedural republic" is indefensible. FT

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Report

The Penalty for Wrong Ideas

Paul T. McCain

A court case in Minnesota (*Lundman v. McKown*) raises important questions for the ongoing interpretation and application of the First Amendment. The case involves a young boy's untimely and tragic death.

The boy was a Christian Scientist. He was also a diabetic. The boy's family, in accord with their church's religious belief and practice, did not seek conventional medical treatment but instead used spiritual healing to deal with their son's illness. The natural father of the boy (his parents were divorced) filed suit against the Christian Science practitioner, the boy's natural mother and her husband, and against the First Church of Christ, Scientist. The jury awarded $5.2 million in compensatory damages against all the defendants jointly. The court then imposed punitive damages, only against the Christian Scientist Church, in the amount of nine million dollars. The case is now being appealed to the Minnesota State Court of Appeals. *Lundman v. McKown* may well become a landmark case in the effort to maintain First Amendment rights to free exercise of religion.

A number of religious organizations have joined together to file an amicus curiae brief in support of the Church of Christ, Scientist. They represent a strikingly diverse cross-section of American religious life. The participants in the amicus brief include: the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Church of the Nazarene, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, the Orthodox Church in America, and the United House of Prayer for All People of the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith.

Lundman v. McKown raises a number of issues. Punitive damages are often awarded against defendants in civil cases where there has been "wrongful" conduct. As defined by the law, for conduct to be considered "wrongful" it must be wanton and reckless, or an intentional wrongdoing. At the time of the events of this case, there was no criminal statute on the books in Minnesota making it illegal for parents to refrain from seeking medical treatment for their children. In fact, in many states there are express exceptions built into child protection statutes in light of Christian Scientist practice. Now, apparently as a result of this case, Minnesota has enacted a law requiring Christian Scientist parents to report a serious illness to the child protection agency in their area that will monitor the situation and, if necessary, remove the child from the Christian Scientist home and take the child for medical treatment.

The Rev. Paul T. McCain *is Assistant to the President of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.*

The fundamental question *Lundman v. McKown* raises is whether the First Amendment would prohibit a court from imposing punitive damages against a church for a particular religious belief or practice. The amicus brief filed in support of the Christian Church, Scientist argues that "The imposition of punitive damages by civil juries against churches in an effort to force a change in their religious doctrines presents a threat to constitutional liberties beyond those immediately involved in this case. As a practical matter, no more serious danger to religious freedom exists than the power of juries to punish religious groups for beliefs or practices that in a jury room may seem distasteful, unreasonable, or outrageous." The imposition of punitive damages against religious bodies in large sums constitutes a "significant burden" on the autonomy of these religious groups. Such large penalties actually constitute a prohibition against the free exercise of religion. A court can effectively destroy a church body through the use of punitive damage awards.

It is clear in this case that the punitive damages were awarded precisely because of the religious beliefs and conduct of the Christian Scientist Church. The counsel for the plaintiff in this case stated plainly that the punitive damages being sought were intended to punish the church for its religious belief. During the trial the plaintiff's attorney argued that, "It is with . . . First Church that you go below the surface of these policies. If you want to establish a change, if you want to deter and make a difference, it is against the First Church that a punitive damage award will make a difference." At another point the lawyer wondered out loud if the church has "heard a message to change [its] policies."

In preparing for the appeal of this case the plaintiff's attorney solicited an amicus brief from the Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association. He stated that the punitive damage award "will force the First Church of Christ, Scientist to reform its policies regarding seriously ill children or risk financial ruin." The defendant's amicus brief argues that "the jury's nine million dollar award puts the Church to an ugly Hobson's choice of either compromising its faith or

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going bankrupt. The amici believe that the First Amendment cannot be read to allow such a devastating assault on religious liberty." The brief indicates that in proportion to the size of the church body, a nine-million-dollar award against the Church of Christ, Scientist would be comparable to a 600 million dollar award against the Southern Baptist Convention or a two *billion* dollar award against the Roman Catholic Church.

A second argument raised in the brief is that the threat of a punitive damage will have a "chilling" effect on a church body. The simple fact is that if a religious organization is confronted by the threat of punitive damages, it may have to give up doctrinal tenets that the court might find to be grounds for awarding punitive damages. Churches might have to stop spreading certain religious tenets, and their members could be forced to avoid acting on their beliefs.

What, for instance, would happen if a woman sued a church for teaching that abortion is not a moral option in the case of an inconvenient pregnancy? What would happen if a jury could be persuaded by a zealous lawyer that such a teaching is mentally damaging to the woman? What if this woman died during childbirth? Would her family be able to sue a church that counsels strongly against abortion? Conceivably a jury could impose a multi-million dollar punitive judgment against the church. Or, what would happen in the case of a church sued by a homosexual who claims that the church's teaching that homophile behavior is an intrinsic moral evil is a violation of his/her civil liberties? The list could go on. The brief points out that it is not adequate to argue that punitive damage awards will only prevent unprotected conduct. A court ruled in 1971 that "any system that punishes certain speech is likely to induce self-censorship by those who would otherwise exercise their constitutional freedom" (*Rosenbloom v. Metromedia, Inc.,* 403 U.S. 29, 64 [1971], Harlan, J., dissenting).

The third point raised by the amicus brief is the specter of a jury imposing its religious biases on a religious organization. The brief argues that because the power to impose punitive damage is the power to destroy, punitive damages may be used—indeed, have been used—to harass and suppress unpopular movements. During the civil rights efforts in the 1960s suits were used in an attempt to thwart the movement. The brief points out that the Supreme Court has recognized that the First Amendment does place limitations on the power of juries to impose punitive damages in defamation cases. The brief argues that juries must be instructed that they can only punish churches for clearly illegal activities, not for constitutionally protected religious activity. Thus, in this case, since there was no criminal law on the books that prohibited parents from practicing spiritual healing, the punitive award improperly penalized the church for its religious doctrine. The fact is that there is religious bigotry in this nation. Unpopular or misunderstood religious dogma can be subject to the whim of a jury. Religious beliefs, the brief emphasizes, must be protected under the First Amendment.

The issue is not whether a religious group should be free to do anything it wants to do, without regard to the law. Nor do the participants in the amicus brief necessarily believe that one should rely only on prayer, to the exclusion of conventional medicine, in the case of illness. They do, however, support the right of the Christian Scientists to adhere to religious beliefs and to practice these beliefs without undue restraint by the government. No one suggests that religious organizations may engage in illegal activities with impunity. Churches must remain liable for compensatory damages for negligence or for intentional misconduct for which they are legally responsible. For instance, if a church ignores one of its workers who has been known to have engaged in illegal activities, the church, if aware of this situation, may be held liable in compensatory damages for the worker's illegal activities. In *Lundman v. McKown,* however, the church was acting in accord with its religious doctrine and practice, which the state had not passed legislation against. We are dealing here with a fine line, but a very important one. The argument against the Christian Scientist Church is not that the activity of the church was illegal, but that it was wrong. Thus it is the Christian Scientists' belief and the practice of that belief that is at issue.

The imposition of punitive damages in this case and in others like it is a burden on the free exercise of religion which the First Amendment is designed to prevent. The amici argue that in this case the First Amendment does provide a source for judicial constraint against punitive damages awarded on the basis of religious belief and practice. Further, at a bare minimum, a court should instruct juries on the limitation imposed by the First Amendment in regard to punitive damage awards.

The issues raised by this case are pivotal to debates raging across our country in regard to the so-called separation of church and state. They strike deeply at the right of free exercise of religion. As more traditional religious teachings are looked upon with disfavor and even open hostility on the part of the nation's cultural leaders, the threat of societal disfavor may grow larger. The specter of group-think on religious issues is a direct threat to religious liberty.

Not only is religious discourse being written out of the public discourse of our day, it now appears that activist courts are willing to let juries impose crippling monetary awards against church bodies. Persecution against religion has taken many forms over

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the centuries. Huge monetary awards are as potentially harmful as more direct forms of persecution in terms of their capacity to punish a particular religious point of view. This case will be an important test of how our nation wishes to understand and apply the First Amendment. And that is why many are watching with great interest to see if the "wrong" ideas will be penalized. FT

First Visions

—Hildegard of Bingen to Her Secretary, the monk Volmar, 1141

Even now they enter me
like a humming tide of light,
a bright cloud that waters
the Earth with *veriditas,*
the greening power of life.
What is it I call a dream
yet see with my eyes open?
The calf in the womb,
spoked wheels of light,
stars in an ovate universe,
a brightness that makes my soul tremble.

I aged but three when alone
I witnessed this splendor.
Fear stitched my lips for
I could not know what seal
God placed on my heart.
I cried and weakened while
the world about me shimmered.

Like Anna, widowed prophetess,
years I lived bereft as vision
after vision left me bedridden.
At last, Anna glimpsed the child
and knew deliverance.
So when Jutta, my teacher,
my sole keeper, observed
me troubled, guessed
my visions, God enfolded
me in His mantle.

Stella Nesanovich

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Books In Review

The Lost Synthesis?

PASSAGE TO MODERNITY: AN ESSAY IN THE HERMENEUTICS OF NATURE AND CULTURE. By LOUIS DUPRÉ. *Yale University Press. 320 pp. $32.50.*

Reviewed by
Werner J. Dannhauser

PROFESSOR DUPRÉ has written a challenging and stimulating book, a work that is serious in the best sense of the word both because of what he investigates and the commendable fervor he brings to his investigation. (I have never read a book dealing with intellectual history that features so many exclamation points.) He does not always make a compelling case, nor is what he's "getting at" always perfectly clear, but he deserves gratitude for the steady provocation to think that he offers his readers.

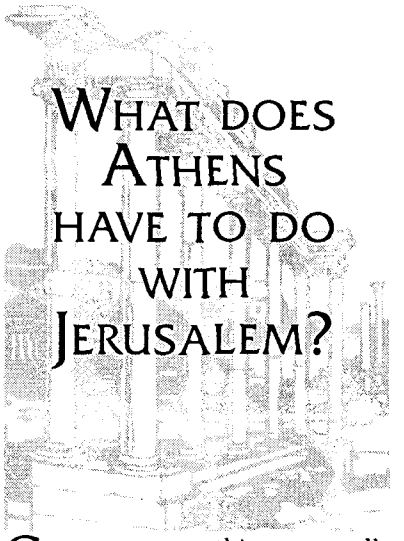
Dupré sets for himself the ambitious task of understanding the origins, nature, and direction of modernity. To start at the "wrong end," he shows that modernity is in many ways alive and well today notwithstanding the severe and hostile criticisms of it by the cluster of movements called postmodernism. I find this part of Dupré's argument completely convincing, if only because the impact on human life of science and technology has not declined noticeably because of the efforts of Derrida, Foucault, and company, or even of Nietzsche and Heidegger, thinkers of incomparably greater stature. Nietzsche, in decisive ways the first and greatest of postmodernists, understood perfectly well that history, especially the history of thought, is a seamless web, which in part explains why he never ceased to wrestle with what he called "the problem of Socrates." Those who teach the history of philosophy will find ample ammunition from Dupré to help them show their students and others that the twentieth century did not in a deep way supersede what had gone before, that the problems articulated by Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and perhaps Freud are the same problems we confront as our century lurches to a close.

DUPRÉ ALSO suggests that our understanding of the beginnings of modernity needs correction. For a long time it has been customary to fix the origins at around 1500. In so doing one can refer to the Protestant Reformation, to the discovery of America, to incipient developments in the natural sciences. That the date is far from arbitrary even if one concentrates more strictly on philosophy can be shown by a simple reference to Niccolo Machiavelli, who lived from 1469 to 1527 and who was credited for his originality by no less a philosophical authority than Spinoza.

Dupré mentions Machiavelli, of course, but seems to pay more attention to earlier and lesser-known figures like William of Ockham (1290-1349/50) and even Bonaventure (1221-74). He has written what almost amounts to an alternative history of Western thought, providing as he does intriguing information about figures one feels one *should* know but really doesn't: Cusanus, Ficino, Jansenius, and many more.

In this part of the book too, the author is more often than not persuasive. His erudition is invariably impressive, especially because he is never guilty of merely showing off, and also because he is at home in various bodies of knowledge, including art and alchemy. Yet one is sometimes puzzled by the story Dupré tells, because one is not entirely clear as to its purpose. The historian of ideas deals with issues over which men's blood has been shed—but who would want to die over the question of the periodization of his-

WERNER J. DANNHAUSER *is Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University.*



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tory? Is he reclaiming late medieval thought because it has been unjustly neglected and we can still learn from it? Is he undermining the self-proclaimed radicalism of late modernity and attacking our hubris by proving that much that is considered modern has been around for a long, long time? Is he showing that Christianity, or certain strands of it, which is usually thought of as being buffeted or even destroyed by the various credos of modernity, is itself modern in decisive respects so that Jonathan Swift had good reason for casting St. Thomas as a modern in *The Battle of the Books*? One suspects that one or more of these considerations might weigh heavily with Dupré, but one is not always certain what he's "getting at," especially because one is almost always confident that he is far from being a victim of mere antiquarianism.

THE AUTHOR'S main concern, however, is neither with the end nor the beginning of modernity, but with its essence or nature. It is an endeavor that needs no more justification than any exercise in self-understanding, and an endeavor he executes with admirable acumen. And it is on the success of this endeavor that he deserves to be judged.

Dupré understands modernity in terms of the breakdown of what he calls, rather too forbiddingly, the breakdown of an "ontological synthesis" and the constant attempt to cope with the resulting fragmentation. At the risk of doing some injustice to the author's sense of "nuance and scruple" one can say that to premodern humanity the world seemed a much more orderly and benign place. A providential God presided over a teleological nature. In such a world man occupied a central, though not necessarily the highest, place. His soul was at least potentially attuned to the inferior body it ruled and the superior forces that ruled it in turn. Order and excellence were somehow sustained in a universe that was a cosmos rather than a chaos.

Dupré skillfully traces the unraveling of the synthesis he describes, emphasizing the fateful development of religious thought ushered in by a nominalism that distanced, if it did not altogether remove, God from His creation. Nominalist thought can be said to have fallen on the fertile ground of Italian humanism. In the latter's extoling of human creativity it might be taken as yet another chapter of the human excess with which the Bible familiarizes us in the story of the Tower of Babel. In this connection, one does well to remember that in the Bible the verb "to create" is reserved for the activity of God. Human beings are makers and not creators, just as they are described as singers rather than poets.

Human beings thus oriented cannot rest comfortably with the idea of an organic, purposive nature that assigns them a dignified but limited place. A world of limits comes to be considered an affront to humanity. The task then is for human beings to turn themselves into the "lords and masters" of nature. Bacon writes of the conquest of nature "for the relief of man's estate." Thomas Hobbes, whose radicalism Dupré fully appreciates, in his most celebrated sentence writes of life in the state of nature as "solitary, nasty, brutish, and short." Nature ceases to be understood as either divine or demonic; rather it is an object, providing what Locke calls "the almost worthless material" for human progress. All this looks forward to the dreams (or delusions) of both Hegel and Marx of a total humanization of nature.

In a world characterized by the absence of transcendent natural standards, a world in which God is so silent that belief begins to wither, the human yearning for meaning becomes ever more difficult to satisfy. Instead of a soul that *discovers* meaning, human beings are gradually understood to possess a self with the task of *creating* meaning. "Self, self, self," old Chuzzlewit mutters in Dickens' novel. He is thinking of garden-variety selfishness, but a hundred years later he might have bemoaned the emphasis on modern self-esteem rather than traditional virtue.

SO MODERNITY accelerates. It celebrates many triumphs in speech and deed, but by most accounts it heads into a spiritual desert that is labelled "the death of God" by Nietzsche. (Dupré's more restrained language makes repeated use of the term "fragmentation.") Humanity seems to have lost its moorings and bearings; many things can be said of modern man, but not that he is either happy or good.

Modernity's self-awareness of its fractured state not only serves to heighten its pain, but leads to various and repeated attempts to replace fragmentation with a new synthesis. The author is sympathetic to these endeavors but quite rightly judges them to be, however valiant, unsuccessful.

Dupré, in this respect, deals sensitively with the Renaissance, the early humanists, the Reformation, the Jansenists, but most admiringly with the Baroque. Their partial successes and their ultimate failures do

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not deter him from looking and hoping for a new synthesis, though near the end of his narrative he does write of "the definitive withdrawal of the transcendent dimension from Western culture." One wishes he had told us more of what he means by "culture," obviously a concept central to his concern. Does he mean a kind of atmosphere that absolutely prohibits the thinking of some things or is it merely an impediment to most of the people most of the time? It is probably true that during an age of belief, almost everybody believes, but it is equally true that as long ago as biblical times it could be, and was, said that "the fool has said in his heart 'there is no God.'"

Dupré's idea of an efficacious synthesis is one that is in essential respects a religious one. In his commendable faith, or at least faith in faith, he may have underestimated the tenacity of atheism throughout human history. It is true, of course, as Edmund Burke saw, that with the French Revolution atheists became more enterprising, bold, and public, but they were always around, and especially among the classes generating ideas. After all, the Athenians were not entirely wrong in suspecting Socrates' professions of piety.

SOME HISTORIANS of ideas have doubtlessly erred in finding atheists lurking everywhere; Dupré can fairly be charged with the opposite tendency of spotting believers wherever he looks. Thus, he finds that Francis Bacon's attitude was "religiously inspired" and that the epilogue of Montaigne's "Apology" should "not be read as an expression of religious skepticism." He tries to rescue Erasmus' piety from the historical tarnishing of his reputation in this respect, he thinks of Rabelais as a believer, and he puts credence in a recent study that refers to Machiavelli's regular church attendance (as though that would prove very much). It may be safer to trust Pascal, who had no qualms about calling both Montaigne and Descartes atheists.

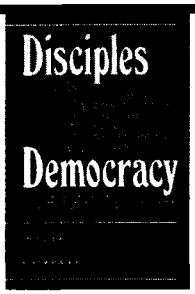
I have one more nit to pick. Dupré may underestimate the fragility of the synthesis whose breakup he chronicles. He understands very well that every synthesis contains tensions and he appreciates the extent to which those tensions can invigorate the lives of human beings who experience them. At times, however, one must wonder whether such antitheses as faith and reason or Athens and Jerusalem *can* really be synthesized. Very often what looks at first sight like a synthesis turns out to conceal the dominance of one or another element.

These are minor cavils. The author's analysis, as well as the spirit in which he executes it, deserves applause. Critical of modernity, Dupré nevertheless sees the futility as well as danger of any attempted reactionary retreat from it. Nor does he think "the modern program" is obsolete, preferring to think of it as "unfinished." And he writes in the manner of a man who prefers discussion to argument, a rare and welcome phenomenon.

DISCIPLES and DEMOCRACY

Religious Conservatives and the Future of American Politics

Edited by **MICHAEL CROMARTIE**
Foreword by **IRVING KRISTOL**



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SAVING PHILANTHROPY FROM ITSELF

GIVING: CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN HISTORY. By ROBERT H. BREMNER. *Transaction. 235 pp. $34.95.*

Reviewed by **Michael S. Joyce**

WE ARE EXPERIENCING a period of unprecedented charitable giving in America (it peaked in 1989 and was precipitated, of course, by what liberals have identified as "the politics of greed"), and we are on the cusp of an equally unprecedented intergenerational transfer of wealth that will beget a great many trusts for the perpetual institutionalization of such giving. We may properly be grateful for the spirit of these wonderful gestures, but can we be confident that good will come of them? Indeed, at a time when the most demonstrable effect of many of our popular efforts to do good works has been dramatically to increase whatever problems they had been designed to ameliorate, we may even have reason to fear whether our nation can withstand a torrent of generosity.

As this specter joins all the other specters haunting America, it bespeaks an urgent need for wisdom in the practice of philanthropy that inclines one to open Robert H. Bremner's *Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History* with more hope than this slim omnium-gatherum of Western thought on charity and philanthropy can satisfy. Some of the best and worst ideas can be found here, from sound moral principles to mere posturings, but Bremner does not offer an opinion as to which is which.

As Bremner visits writers, poets, philosophers, saints, and reformers, from Aeschylus to Toni Morrison, for their views of the philanthropic project, his chronological array of anecdotes and historical insights—many of them precious—does not show any improving pattern of growth in philanthropic thinking. Progress has not been kind to philanthropy. And the effectiveness of charity, which is hardly addressed in this book, certainly cannot be said to have advanced, unless advancement is a matter of growing larger, of generating new programs with new acronyms, of *networking* with other *caregivers*, of establishing task forces, of expanding promiscuously to take on "hot" issues, of hiring more effective fund raisers, and of having more and more *clients* in need of service from one year to the next.

BREMNER TELLS US that modern philanthropy took shape around the turn of the century when millionaires like Carnegie and Rockefeller sought "practical, socially useful ways of disposing of surplus wealth." Well, "disposing" is not a nice verb—especially in a book about "giving"—and the distinction between wealth and "surplus wealth" is arguable, but there was also much more to the shaping of modern philanthropy than the sharp increase on its supply side that the new American fortunes brought into play. Bremner has the time about right, but it was the progressives of that era, not its millionaires, who tragically modernized the business of helping others.

As Marvin Olasky has shown elsewhere, in the late nineteenth century many small volunteer groups in cities throughout America were performing works of mercy—in the words of the Industrial Christian Alliance, to "restore the fallen and helpless to self-respect and self-support." Typically, the first objective of these groups with an applicant for relief was to get to know—to know, personally—the individual in need of assistance, not as a client, but as a fellow human being. Through their faith and good works they put the lie to the hopeless theories of Social Darwinism and enabled thousands of those in need to gain control of their lives. British author David Green has recently written of the apolitical welfare services provided by guilds and lodges and friendly societies of that period in England, using the term *civic capitalism* to underscore the moral context that distinguished their kind of capitalism from laissez faire libertarianism.

But these magnificent institutions of civil society and their effective methods were replaced, at the peak of their performance, by larger, more professional, more specialized and centralized organizations with a distinctly different character.

The philosophy transforming charity at the turn of the century is found in Bremner's quotes from George Bernard Shaw, who presages the Great Society when he identifies relief as "a public duty, like enforcement of sanitation, that should be undertaken by the public." Shaw also professes the ideology of victimization when he asserts that an undependable, alcoholic employee suffers from "a disadvantage exactly similar to that suffered by the blind . . . or any other victim of impaired faculty." As Shaw was writing, Jane Addams—whom Bremner has discussed in other books but to whom he makes no reference in this one—was establishing Hull House, which she proclaimed would have "no religious affiliations" and where "one of the first lessons" she learned was "that private beneficence was totally inadequate."

The injection of government into, and the removal of moral content from, the project of helping the needy were two sides of the same coin, which, like a coin, confirmed Gresham's Law: bad philanthropy would drive out good. Professional, impersonal, scientific, secular organizations would drive out authentic, community-based, morally guided service to the needy. A political message would drive out a moral one. Philanthropy would drift from the task of helping individuals to that of representing them, from the task of reforming individuals to that of reforming the world.

Between society and a panhandler, the voluntary associations of civil society would stand facing the panhandler, addressing him by name, counseling him to have faith

MICHAEL S. JOYCE *is President of the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.*

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in God and himself, to take a bath, to quit drinking. The progressives turned away from the panhandler. They faced us. They told us it is we who must change. In particular, we must supply funding, through charitable giving and taxes, for the administration of a multitude of programs that employ a multitude of program administrators. The panhandler is a victim of addiction, of racism, of unemployment, of hunger, of inadequate funding of education, housing, and rehabilitation, of a lack of self-esteem, of manifold unmet needs that prevail in an uncaring social order. What can *he* do about such problems?

In the prose and poetry with which Bremner represents modern thinking on philanthropy there is nothing on which to base a discussion of the ideology of progressives that came to dominate the organization and administration of philanthropy. If he cites any criticism, it is of wealthy donors, portrayed as philanthropic dilettantes, but not of the welfare state mentality that has vastly expanded the population of an underclass characterized by a rejection of the very gifts—moral responsibility, moderation, civility, faith, hope, and love—that earlier charity sought to give them. Agents of the welfare state, and of private sector organizations modeled on it, knowingly withhold from their *clients* what every decent man or woman freely shares with any truly cared for friend or relative: the traditional wisdom and morals and manners of the middle class. Victims need not apply.

It is the present and urgent task of philanthropy to save itself from a century of "progress." The centralizing, bureaucratizing force of progressive ideology has crowded out and delegitimized the once thriving voluntary organizations of civil society. To a great extent, this pernicious trend has been well supported by grant-making institutions of private philanthropy, which disregarded the basic and effective plans proposed by local volunteer groups in favor of the trendy projects of national experts. Worse, it became the strategic objective of several powerful private foundations to use their grants to leverage other funding, with the goal of engaging government support for programs they selected. Great bequests from fortunes built by entrepreneurial genius were thus put to the task of expanding the welfare state.

Foundations and individual donors must turn from this path of demonstrated failure and support every effort to revitalize the institutions of civil society: the family, the church, the civic organizations, and the block clubs. The wonderful American impulse to associate for the pursuit of common goals and good works deserves encouragement and demands respect.

Bremner makes no call for philanthropy to reverse its direction, but

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in his final chapter, suddenly departing the literary scene, he turns to newspaper clippings he has collected to tell such stories as that of Clara Hale. A poor woman in a poor neighborhood, Clara Hale when in her mid-sixties took in a baby who had become addicted to drugs while in his mother's womb and went on to found Hale House, a group home for addicted children in Harlem. It was Clara Hale, not an expert, not a bureaucracy, who did this. Had she exercised her citizenship in the modern, tragically devalued sense of that term, Clara Hale would merely have advocated, through voting and political activism, more programs for state-funded professionals to care for these children of God. But she did not turn away from them and speak to society. She held them and spoke their names to them.

Clara Hale's sense of citizenship, her active and direct participation in service to her fellow man, displays the vibrancy and proves the superiority of civil society. As the supply side for philanthropy continues to grow, let us pray it will be employed to support, and never again to displace, the Clara Hales of this world.

Food for Thought —and Life

THE HUNGRY SOUL: EATING AND THE PERFECTING OF OUR NATURE. By LEON R. KASS. *Free Press. 248 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Molly Finn**

DR. KASS begins: "Be forewarned: You have picked up a strange book." He is correct; it is strange. It is a book about eating, but not once will your mouth water as you read it. It's about eating, but not about food. In his account, food is desired, is grown, is gathered, is hunted, killed, and dressed, is cooked and put on the table—but is never *described*, especially not in the kind of loving phrases to be found in restaurant reviews. Entries for only five foods can be found in the index (not including Bacon, Francis and Ham [Noah's son]), and three more along the lines of "Pig, dietary laws against eating."

I suspect that more than one would-be reader has bought this book for its seductive title, expecting food lore plus a little pop psychology, including a few pointers for self-improvement. There *is* a certain amount of food lore here—a few interesting pages about the mental processes involved in turning "certain harvestable and storable but inedible" seeds into flour and then into bread, "even more than meat . . . the human food"; a passage on the aesthetic value of salt, "the first spice of life"; and the views of Plato and Socrates on wine-drinking. Kass himself is clearly ambivalent on this latter subject. While he admits that "in moderate amounts [wine] inspires and encourages," he adds in a footnote that "real friends do not need wine to attain and enjoy friendship." That's about as much pop psychology as can be found in this book. There are a few pointers for self-improvement, though. "[E]ating on the street . . . betokens enslavement to the belly. . . . This doglike feeding, if one must engage in it, ought to be kept from public view where, even if *we* feel no shame, others are compelled to witness our shameful behavior." And "the virtues of graciousness and moderation . . . [are] best summarized in the maxim, No involuntary participation in another's digestion."

IT IS Dr. Kass's intention to go far beyond food lore and simple psychologizing. Rather, he has written a philosophical treatise he describes as a "full-course inquiry into how we differ from other animals." He begins with a vivid description of the bleak emptiness into which the scientific view of the world has led contemporary man, stranding him befuddled on the stage of life, barely able to remember the name of the drama he is acting in, much less its meaning or its purpose, and unable to consult the dead playwright as to his original intention. But alienated and distressed in spirit as he may be, man still craves love and intimacy, dignity, understanding and openness to the divine. Deprived of the nourishment found in traditional mores and forms, his soul is hungry. Kass asks: "How does one truly

MOLLY FINN *is a writer living in New York City.*

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nourish the hungry human soul?"

This question leads him to an extended philosophical inquiry into the subject of eating. He examines the nature of food and feeding in animals. He identifies "the great paradox of eating, namely that to preserve their life and form living forms necessarily destroy life and form." He considers man's omniverousness and the conventions it gives rise to, the manners that transform feeding into eating, or rather, dining, and—reflecting a "true understanding of the nature of nature and of man's place within it"—that lead to a celebration of the mysterious source of the "formed and multiform world and its generous hospitality in providing food, both for life and for thought."

The author states that he finds in the subject of eating "a perfect vehicle for attempting . . . a more natural science and for building a bridge between the scientific and humanistic ways of looking at the world." As he develops the progression from feeding to feasting, the distinction between animals and humans is refined. Our upright posture puts us face to face with the world in a new way and "orients us toward the beautiful, the good, the true, and the holy." Our omniverousness leads us to place limitations on what (or whom) we eat, restraining ourselves with laws—the beginning of ethics. From our awareness of the needs of others grow customs of hospitality. Through eating with others we grow more civil; the family table becomes a school for life:

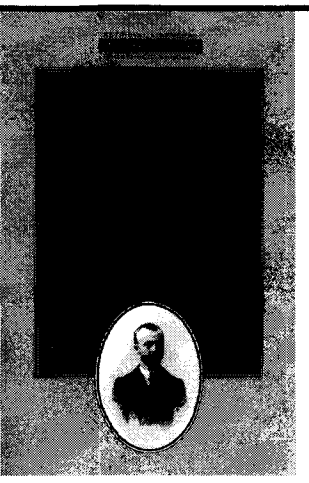
> [I]ncivility, insensitivity, and ingratitude learned at the family table can infect all other aspects of one's life. Conversely, good habits and thoughtful attitudes regarding food and eating will have far-reaching benefits. Self-restraint and self-command, consideration for others, politeness, fairness, generosity, tact, discernment, good taste, and the art of friendly conversation—all learnable and practiced at the table—enrich and ennoble all of human life.

Human eating reaches its highest point in the experience of transcendence, the sanctification of eating.

Kass believes we truly nourish the hungry human soul through the humanization of eating:

> With the rise of intelligence the hungry soul seeks satisfaction in activities animated also by wonder, ambition, affection, curiosity, and awe. We human beings delight in beauty and order, art and action, sociability and friendship, insight and understanding, song and worship. And, as self-conscious beings, we especially crave self-understanding and knowledge of our place in

MAURICE BLONDEL
THE LETTER ON APOLOGETICS and HISTORY AND DOGMA



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the larger whole. All these appetites of the hungry soul can in fact be satisfied at the table, provided that we approach it in the proper spirit. The meal taken at table is the cultural form that enables us to respond simultaneously to all the dominant features of our world: Inner need, natural plenitude, freedom and reason, human community, and the mysterious source of it all. In humanized eating, we can nourish our souls even while we feed our bodies.

In his analysis of the problem of modern man and in his solution to that problem, Kass places a heavy burden on his chosen theme. It must always be dangerous to tease out a single strand from the complex web of human life and hang on it the entire weight of civilization's problems and achievements. It is hard not to wonder why anyone would court what can be only a very partial success. The book is a balancing act, with fascinating bits of information and an impressive collection of interesting quotations, both in and out of footnotes, conjoined with slow-moving arguments that read like passages from a Philosophy 101 textbook. Paragraphs filled with moral fervor alternate with flavorless descriptions of festive occasions.

Kass wishes to avoid traditional philosophic jargon, relying instead on the language of shared experience. However, where he follows the forms of a traditional philosophical essay he is forced to invent his own jargon (complete with etymologies and italicized, multiply-hyphenated words) as he laboriously builds a case for points that could be more concisely and convincingly made by direct statement fortified with example. Rarely do his abstractions communicate his points as well as his concrete examples and explanations. It is refreshing to read, after an abstract discussion of animal forms and how they are recognized, "In . . . ordinary speech [when we acknowledge the "species character of animal form by the use of such general names as 'lion,' 'tiger,' etc."] we do no more than acknowledge what any healthy rabbit recognizes . . . when it flees from all hounds, finds all carrots to its taste, and mates only with other rabbits."

One of Kass's preoccupations is with what he calls the "problematic character of eating: the paradoxical and problematic relationship between any living being and the rest of the world; for in eating, each living form homogenizes other forms and denies other life, appropriating them solely for its own use. . . ." The morally neutral animal, whether herbivore or carnivore, consumes his chosen food without awareness of the problematic nature of what he is doing and unburdened by the author's negative judgment. When man takes his place in the food chain, however, Kass reveals to us his image of the human omnivore, who is "by his inborn nature *der grosse Fresser*—the great devourer and glutton—who stuffs his face and gorges his belly with the widest variety of fodder." It is odd to designate as "problematic" an activity engaged in by all living creatures, one indeed that is necessary to the continuation of life. The natural order or progression of eating patterns could be more accurately described as "hierarchical" without disturbing Kass's argument that man, at the top of the hierarchy, "if he is not to become the worst of the animals . . . must be restrained by law and justice."

THE MOST SERIOUS shortcoming of this book is the author's decision to use a detailed analysis of Jewish dietary laws as found in Leviticus as the sole significant illustration of man's acknowledgment of the holy in his relation to eating. Kass declares that the "the dietary laws of Leviticus commemorate the Creation and the Creator and beckon us toward holiness." His analysis here is long and labored, and the laws seem very far removed from the shared experience Kass says he wishes to use as the ground of his argument.

Far more eloquent would be some recognition of the ways in which people do habitually express their reverence for the holiness of eating. Common expressions of such reverence in our culture would be saying grace before meals, celebrating great religious occasions by feasting, the establishment of a ritual meal such as the Seder, and most es-

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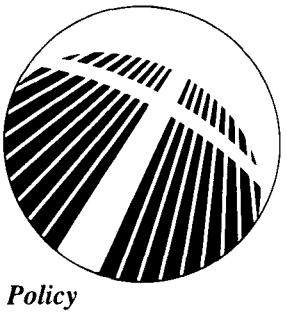

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pecially, the Christian Eucharist, in which the consumption of a meal becomes the central act of worship. Participating in the Eucharist, at once incorporating the holy into one's self by eating and sharing this union with the entire human community, is believed by a large portion of the audience Kass is addressing to be the culmination of the realization that man is different from animals and aware of the symbolic significance to which eating can rise. In ignoring this feast of feasts, Dr. Kass has significantly diminished the power of his book.

What Mendel Wrought

THE GENE WARS: SCIENCE, POLITICS, AND THE HUMAN GENOME. By ROBERT COOK-DEEGAN. *Norton. 416 pp. $25.*

Reviewed by
Bernard N. Nathanson

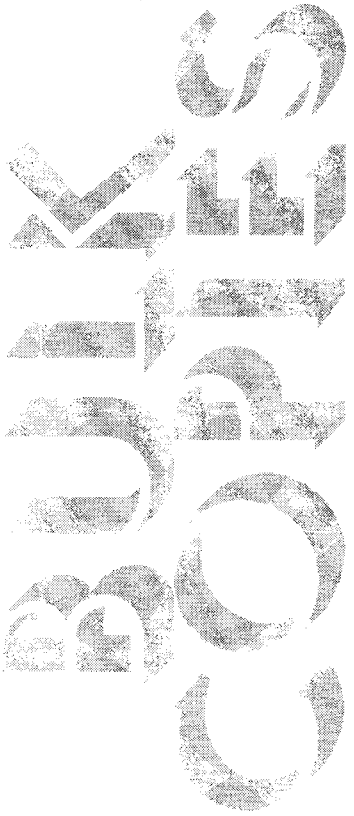
I MUST confess that I didn't understand genetics in high school biology; I understood it but loathed it in college; and I continued to loathe it in medical school. I found it boring, static, and irrelevant, and in no sense a science.

But that was then and this is now. With the advent of molecular biology (and molecular genetics) in the 1960s it all began to make sense. Genetics was no longer a boring bowl of Gregor Mendel's pea soup but a dynamic and even thrilling science. And with the revelation that written on those strands of DNA inside each cell of our body is a code so ingenious that it took the keenest minds in the biological sciences almost fifty years to decipher it, that science has become arguably the most riveting and the most controversial matter in the lexical ordering of human sapience today.

A quick historical overview. In 1865 the monk Gregor Mendel, working primarily with pea plants, demonstrated the heritable traits and characteristics of living things. Alas, his work languished in the scientific backwaters for forty years. In 1877 chromosomes were first identified in the living cell. In 1902 Walter Sutton first proposed that it is the chromosomes that carry Mendel's heritable traits. In 1909 the Danish biologist Wilhelm Johanssen coined the term "gene" for the heredity unit located on the chromosomes. In 1911 Edmund B. Wilson located for the first time with precision an inherited trait on a specific chromosome: the color blindness trait residing on the X chromosome. In 1941 George W. Beadle and Edward L. Tatum showed rather elegantly that the genes operate to instruct the biochemical machinery of the cell to produce proteins and enzymes, in which order and in what quantity.

The watershed breakthrough in modern genetics occurred in 1953 when Sir Francis Crick and James

BERNARD N. NATHANSON, M.D., *is currently Visiting Scholar at the Center for Research and Clinical Ethics at Vanderbilt University.*



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Watson won the Nobel Prize for anatomizing the chemical structure of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) and the configuration of the DNA in the chromosome—the so-called "double helix" configuration. Now, suddenly, the means were at hand to analyze and break the ancient code, and to identify at the molecular level where we came from and where we are going. From there it was a relatively short unquantum-like leap to proposing to map the location of each gene on each chromosome (we have 50,000-100,000 genes on our chromosomal complement, so this would be no weekend venture). The undertaking would be known as the Human Genome Project, comparable in magnitude and expense to the Manhattan Project in World War II and the moon-landing effort in the 1960s. The Human Genome Project was finally launched (and, more important, fully funded by the Congress) in 1991—to be headed by the redoubtable James Watson. It was funded at $100 million a year for fifteen years.

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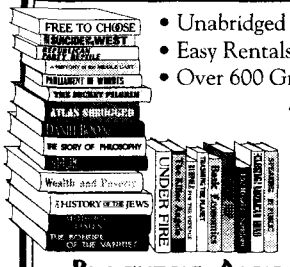

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ROBERT COOK-DEEGAN, a physician long interested in medical genetics, has now produced a book, *The Gene Wars*, purporting to document the progress of the Genome Project from its inception to the present. The subtitle grandly announces that this is the story of "Science, Politics, and the Human Genome," and Cook-Deegan carries out that mission with a zeal that would make the most committed zealot envious. In so doing, he has managed to transmute an extraordinary chronicle of scientific endeavor into a dismayingly tendentious, eye-glazing Baedeker for the labyrinthine recesses of the bureaucratic Beltway. His obsession with task forces, commissions, committees, foundations, and institutes—and the arcana of their funding—reduces this tome to the status of an encyclopedia of baseball statistics. The first section is an exegesis of modern genetic technology so detailed and so pickwickian that it leaves one limp with exhaustion. The second and longest section of the book lingers lovingly over strategy and tactics for increasing the public funding of one's own project at the expense of someone else's; and in truth Machiavelli would shrivel with modesty were he to read of the byzantine stratagems and territorial wars over the scientific-political terrain in this book.

One must admit, however, that withal, this is an impressively researched treatise. The author's bibliography is formidable: 1,327 references, plus acknowledgments to 311 people and some 44 organizations to whom he owes some unspecified debt. In short, the cast of characters is of an epic order. But the plot does suffer.

What Cook-Deegan does *not* take any kind of searching look at are the manifold scientific and ethical questions raised by the Genome Project. Instead, he meticulously documents his own Kafka-esque journeys through the infinitely complex maze of Beltway officialdom. And in doing so, he reveals his own political pedigree in subtle but unmistakable ways. He never, for instance, mentions the landmark work of Dr. Jerome Lejeune, who identified the genetic defect in Down's syndrome (Dr. Lejeune was a towering figure in the pro-life movement until his untimely death this year); and he lists himself as a member of the Board of Directors of Physicians for Human Rights. That Board includes such liberal stalwarts as Aryeh Neier, former Executive Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. He cites the ethicist John C. Fletcher and U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski as two of his most inspirational sources; drags in the issue of the homeless in the most egregiously gratuitous way; denigrates Edward Teller's role in the development of the H-bomb; and assails the 1988 federal moratorium on the use of fetal tissue to treat adult disease. Signposts in a familiar land.

ANYONE SERIOUSLY interested in the Human Genome Project and its innumerable ramifications—real and potential—might rather consult *Genome* (Norton, 1990), written by Jerry Bishop and Michael Waldholz, two *Wall Street Journal* reporters who wrote a prize-winning series on the subject and subsequently turned out a book (now unfortunately out of print) remarkable not only for its comprehensibility in dealing with this complex issue, but also for its prescience.

After an admittedly superficial but sufficient explication of the science of genetics Waldholz and Bishop take on fearlessly the very knotty questions that Cook-Deegan dismisses all too superciliously. They grapple with the core issue of genetic determinism; with the issue of confidentiality (who should be privy to the genetic map of a given individual?); with the issue of genetic screening for people requiring special skills (e.g., airline pilots, truckers, the police and the military, etc.) Further, they recognize and attempt to work through the chilling

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concept of a genetically influenced "biological underclass," as they do the question of IQ and the genes that regulate intelligence—which has become a politically combustible issue with the work of Murray, Hernnstein, Eysenck, Jensen and even earlier the claims of the Nobel Prize-winning scientist William Shockley—along with the role of genetics in character disorders such as criminal behavior, alcoholism, drug addiction, and mental aberration.

The core question lying coiled like a viper at the heart of the genome issue is the matter of gene manipulation, also known as gene therapy: the question is, what will (ought) we do with this technology? Now that we know where the gene for a particular heritable trait is located, now that we have the tools to eliminate or splice or add to that gene locus (restriction enzymes and viral vectors), should we alter our genetic complement? This is of course relatively easy to answer in the case of diseases such as sickle cell anemia, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, and so on.

However, other more difficult questions assert themselves. The costs of screening programs are immense, and the costs of gene therapy are staggering. For example, in the case of ADA deficiency (the so-called "bubble baby" who lacks a vital enzyme in the working of the immune system so that he cannot be exposed to another human for fear of acquiring even the most minor infection which will surely kill him), supplying the necessary gene therapy runs to approximately $250,000 annually. In this era of heightened sensitivity to cost allocations and the rationing of medical care, such matters demand the most careful analysis.

The more difficult questions truly test our moral fiber. Should we tinker with intelligence genes? Do we create a super race? A subhuman class designed to do the menial work of our society? Should we be patenting new animals (the U.S. Supreme Court has said this is permissible)? How about grafting animal genes into humans to produce physical juggernauts—or grafting human genes into animals, to produce smart beasts of burden? Might not some bacterial mutant, created in the laboratory, escape and launch an uncontrollable plague? Is there a gene for homosexuality? Ought we or ought we not look for it? If it should be found, what do we do about it?

I have not even touched on the sensitive matter of enhancement. When we locate the gene that controls the need for sleep, might we not reduce its potency by, say, 50 percent—thus saving four hours a night for more productive work? Should we tinker with the genes that control memory, so that we can store more in the memory banks—but may never be able to suppress the horrid memories so mercifully dealt with by our memory systems now? And what of the genes regulating the entire immune system? If we could re-order them expertly, might we not be able to establish the normal life span of the human at two hundred years? Two thousand years?

Does this all seem impossibly chiliastic? The late physician-novelist Walker Percy remarked: "Here is the prophecy. The behavioral scientist of the future will be able to make sense of the following sort of sentence which presently makes no sense to him whatever: There is a difference between the being-in-the-world of the scientist, and the being-in-the-world of the layman." The San Andreas Fault in the modern mind, widening imperceptibly—but relentlessly.

In all or any of this Robert Cook-Deegan seems to have little interest, lost as he apparently is in the winding corridors of power and politics.

BRIEFLY NOTED

From Newton's Sleep. By Joseph Vining. *Princeton University Press. 368 pp. $24.95.*

This original book by distinguished Michigan legal scholar Joseph Vining finds surprising treasures hidden in lawyers' ways of knowing. The title refers to William Blake's vision of minds becalmed and semi-disabled by exclusive devotion to abstract, depersonalized forms of reasoning. Legal thought, according to Vining, is the modern world's prime example of another, vitally important, family of mental operations. By connecting language and logic to the human person, and with its own inescapable links to action and responsibility, law helps to "keep our minds from becoming kinds of minds rather than minds, our hearts from becoming emotions rather than hearts. . . . [Legal thought] is the daily exercise that not only allows us to sleep in peace, but keeps us from Newton's sleep." Vining makes his case through a series of meditations, verses, commentaries, tales, and dialogues. That unusual form, he explains, is "the only way experience so connected to action and identity will not be lost in the presentation." The result is a collection of thought-provoking fragments that illuminate a variety of subjects likely to be of interest to First Things readers—authority, authenticity, community, bureaucracy, interpretation, and meaning. An innovative thinker, Vining does not spare traditional ideas about law, while critiquing single-minded Marxist, postmodern, and economic theories. He challenges with equal vigor the widely held notions that law can be reduced to processes and rules, or to power relations, or to meaningless signs and marks. Among other aims, he seeks to awaken in legal and nonlegal readers alike an awareness of how law and legal reasoning can provide openings to the transcendent in an increasingly secularized world. At several points, he suggests affinities between the task of the lawyer and that of the theologian. In a concluding fragment, Vining expresses the hope that legal thought, properly understood, may take its place beside other forms of thought that are "self-reflective." Meanwhile, his own book is an important contri-

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bution to the recent legal literature in which scholars such as Anthony Kronman, James Boyd White, and this writer have begun to reexamine what lawyers are doing when they are knowing. This new trend in legal studies has its theological counterpart among those who are pursuing the methods of self-appropriation developed by Bernard Lonergan in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*.

— *Mary Ann Glendon*

THE DREAM THAT FAILED: REFLECTIONS ON THE SOVIET UNION. By WALTER LAQUEUR. *Oxford University Press. 231 pp. $25.*

One of the foremost historians of the modern era offers an incisive and sometimes scathing critique of the way experts have understood and grossly misunderstood the Soviet Union from the Bolshevik coup in 1917 to the collapse of the "evil empire." Almost to the very end, academics, think tank seers, and the CIA were issuing confident reports on the economic and political stability of the fast-crumbling USSR. Some of these analyses actually appeared in scholarly journals after the Soviet Union was no more. Laqueur provides a necessary antidote to excessive trust in expert opinion. Of course there were other experts—e.g., Laqueur, Robert Tucker, Robert Conquest, Richard Pipes—whose more skeptical views about the Soviet Union have been vindicated. So the lesson is not not to trust experts but to choose your experts very carefully. Laqueur is not sanguine about the post-Communist situation in Russia and its former satellites, believing that there is a strong possibility that nationalist and socialist bad habits could converge in a new form of an old disease, national socialism. The Western experts criticized by Laqueur were in many instances very wrongheaded indeed, but they appear as paragons of wisdom and virtue compared with sectors of religious leadership, typically associated with the World Council of Churches, that on many questions parroted the Soviet party line until the end, and do not even now acknowledge that they were wrong or even that the empire was evil. When that history is written, one hopes it will be done with the analytical skill, lucidity, and careful scholarship exemplified by Walter Laqueur.

MERE CREATURES OF THE STATE? By WILLIAM BENTLEY BALL. *Crisis Books (P.O. Box 1006, Notre Dame, IN 46556—800-852-9962). 132 pp. $13.95 paper plus $2 s/h.*

To friends of religious freedom, the author is a figure of heroic stature. From county courts to the Supreme Court, William Ball has defended Americans who dared to defy the imperious edict of the modern state that its claim to sovereignty will brook no rival claims appealing to the sovereignty of conscience and, above all, the sovereignty of God. Especially in the field of education, the government has increasingly treated children as "mere creatures of the state," thus undermining the rights and responsibilities of the family. The present book is a marvelously readable memoir of the legal cases and the people with whom Mr. Ball has worked over the years. In the course of enjoying some ripping good stories, the reader will garner a basic education in the curious ways of jurisprudence in a legal culture that increasingly views religion as a threat, if not a form of social pathology. And those who do not already know will come to understand why William Bentley Ball is viewed as a figure of heroic stature. Foreword by Richard John Neuhaus.

HISTORICAL ROMANCES. By MARK TWAIN. *Library of America. 1,032 pp. $35.*

As with all Library of America editions, this collection of three Twain novels—*The Prince and the Pauper*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*—is exceedingly well-produced. Taken together, these stories (particularly *A Connecticut Yankee*) provide a classic modern view of premodern society: its revulsion with medieval superstition and backwardness and, at the same time, a nostalgia for medieval grandeur coupled with doubts about modern "progress." And then there's just the sheer fun of reading Mark Twain.

RELIGION AND THE RACIST RIGHT. By MICHAEL BARKUN. *University of North Carolina Press. 290 pp. $39.95 cloth, $15.95 paper.*

This is religious exotica, but it is utterly fascinating exotica. Where did fringe groups such as the Aryan Nation and the Posse Comitatus get their curious ideas? Barkun makes a convincing case that the source is the nineteenth-century movement known as British-Israelism, which proposed that white folk (or at least the really white white folk) are the ten lost tribes of Israel. Jews, those who pretend to be Israel, are in fact children of the Devil who will be wiped out in the great race war that is already upon us. Weird stuff interestingly told. Barkun teaches political science at Syracuse University.

KING AMONG THE THEOLOGIANS. By NOEL LEO ERSKINE. *Pilgrim Press. 196 pp. $13.95 paper.*

A book something like this needed to be written. Martin Luther King, Jr., is a very major figure in the history of what today is called public theology. Along with figures such as Walter Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr, King demonstrated a great talent for articulating the connections between Christian themes and public life. Indeed he is the last figure in American life to make direct connections between Christian theology and social change in a manner that was culturally and politically effective. That is what "the Christian right" is attempting to do today, but, while it has demonstrated political effectiveness, it has not yet succeeded in engaging the culture in a manner comparable to the tradition in which King stood.

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Of course that may change in time, although it is admittedly difficult to imagine twenty years from now a book pretending to intellectual seriousness and titled *Pat Robertson Among the Theologians*. Regrettably, the seriousness of the present book leaves much to be desired. The author examines King's work through the perspective of other theologies: Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, James Cone, and "womanist theology." King emerges from each examination as an unfailingly and unqualifiedly great theologian. What is not examined, what is not even mentioned, is the grave discrepancy between King's personal life and his public preachments, or—and this is perhaps more pertinent to his role as theologian—the well-substantiated evidence that Dr. King was not the author of much that appeared in his name both at the Divinity School of Boston University and later in his career. What Dr. King said, and the effect of what he said, are matters deserving of scholarly investigation. Such an investigation could tell us much about Dr. King and, more important, about the curious interactions of religion, culture, and politics in American life. But, in view of his plagiarism, borrowings, and lack of scholarly writing, it is very doubtful that Dr. King can be viewed as a theologian in his own right. That he was such is the unexamined premise of this thoroughly uncritical book. It is as though there is an obligation to demonstrate that a man who is widely revered and was a public figure of enormous consequence must have been great at everything he touched. *King Among the Theologians* is an exercise in mythmaking. The book had its origins in a class taught by Dr. King's widow, Coretta Scott King, and comes with a glowing foreword by Dr. King's daughter, Bernice A. King.

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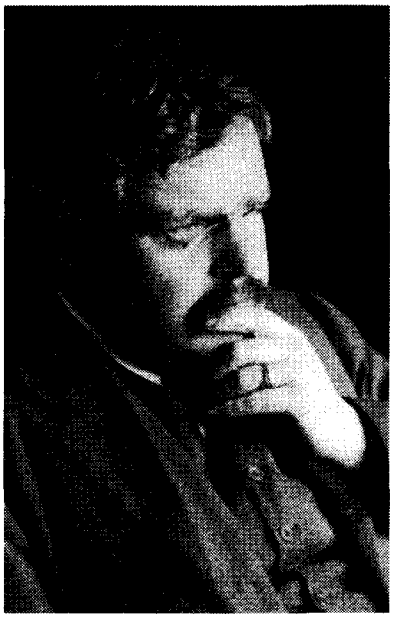

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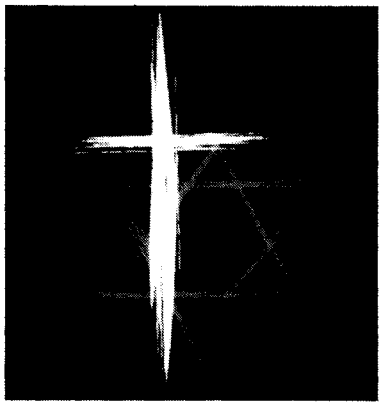

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AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE: AN AMERICAN RABBI AND HIS CONGREGATION. By PAUL WILKES. *Atlantic Monthly Press. 348 pp. $23.*

A chronicling of the day-to-day life and work of Rabbi Jay Rosenbaum and his congregation, Beth Israel of Worcester, Mass. On one level this study describes the kinds of rewards and frustrations experienced by clergymen of all denominations and faiths; on another it provides insight into the more specifically Jewish problem of maintaining a religious and ethnic identity against the seductions of the mainstream culture. The author, a Catholic, has done well to examine a rabbi and congregation in the Conservative movement, where the tension between modernity and tradition is most acute (Orthodoxy being largely fixed in tradition and Reform having largely capitulated to modernity). *And They Shall Be My People* is an interesting example of popular religious sociology, although some readers may find they are getting more quotidian detail than they really want.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MORAL THEOLOGY. By WILLIAM E. MAY. *Our Sunday Visitor. 288 pp. $9.95 paper.*

A standard reference updated to take into account the new catechism and documents such as the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. May teaches moral theology at the Pope John Paul II Institute in Washington. Foreword by James Cardinal Hickey of Washington.

SHAKESPEARE'S CHRISTIAN DIMENSION: AN ANTHOLOGY OF COMMENTARY. Edited by ROY BATTENHOUSE. *Indiana University Press. 520 pp. $35.*

An impressive collection of ninety-two abridged essays identifying the Christian elements in Shakespeare's plays: biblical allusions and symbols, echoes of liturgical and theological language, themes of justice and mercy, intellectual borrowings from the worldviews of Augustine, Boethius, Aquinas, Dante, and Erasmus. The editor, who has himself contributed several incisive essays, rightly argues that contemporary students deserve an alternative to the various hermeneutics of suspicion (advanced by deconstructionists, feminists, etc.) that would deny the timeless art and truth of the Bard. The contributors to this volume write in that older tradition of humane letters that is often a forgotten alternative in the academy today; on that account *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension* is indeed a great feast of learning and beauty.

THE ART OF DEVOTION IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES IN EUROPE 1300-1500. Edited by HANK VAN OS. *Princeton University Press. 192 pp. $49.50.*

Of the making of art books there is no end, but few are as intelligently and tastefully put together as this. Hundreds of engravings, woodcuts, paintings, and sculptures, combined with instructively engaging essays on the relationship between art and piety in the Middle Ages. The authors suggest that the West had a sacramental understanding of such art that is comparable to the Christian East's devotion to the icon. A notable achievement.

DINING WITH THE DEVIL: THE MEGACHURCH MOVEMENT FLIRTS WITH MODERNITY. By OS GUINNESS. *Baker. 113 pp. $6.99 paper.*

An incisive critique of evangelicalism's love affair with big, big, big churches. Whatever the good intentions of the entrepreneurs in charge, Guinness illuminates the ways in which the very dynamics of an obsession with church growth require subordinating the gospel to institutional goals. In fact a relatively small number of evangelical Protestants actually belong to megachurches, but the megachurch "model" bids fair to dominate, and distort, the mission of numerous other local congregations that will never be big, big, big—as the world counts big.

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LIBERATING PAUL: THE JUSTICE OF GOD AND THE POLITICS OF THE APOSTLE. By NEIL ELLIOTT. *Orbis. 308 pp. $18.95 paper.*

Far from advocating subservience to an "oppressive" and "patriarchal" order, as some in the Christian tradition have suggested, Paul is a proponent of an early liberation theology who urges us to practice an "ideological intifada" against the received structures of our time. It appears that Paul anticipated and embraced almost all the progressive proposals of feminism and economic collectivism that have gained currency two millennia later. The author, who teaches at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, does not address what this might mean for the doctrine of scriptural inspiration, but one infers that his doctrine of inspiration is very high indeed.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Getting the Sides Straight

The *Guardian*, a British paper, has a man in Washington named Martin Walker and he reviews two books on the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill controversy. One by Senator John Danforth, *Resurrection*, takes Thomas' side, and the other by Jane Mayer and Jill Abramson, *Strange Justice*, takes Hill's side. Walker suggests that "Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill are to our day what Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers were to the opening years of the Cold War. As in the Dreyfus case in France, an entire political allegiance can be deduced from which of the two sides one decides to believe."

At a deeper level, *Resurrection* reflects a religious orientation, while *Strange Justice* is thoroughly secular. To read these two accounts, says Walker, "is to realize the extent to which the United States is now divided between the two mutually uncomprehending universes of the secular and the godly. The books are written in what are virtually different languages, the one rooted in Faith and the other in Reason." The real lesson of this episode, he suggests, "is that the parallel universe of faith is now able to command equal time and political deference in a constitutional system that we once assumed was the historical product and the enduring province of the rational mind."

There is something to be said for Mr. Walker's analysis, but the real divide is not between faith and reason but between those who do and those who don't pit faith against reason and reason against faith. Almost all secularists do, and so do many, if not most, of the religiously committed. That reality is perhaps the greatest obstacle to restoring moral deliberation to our civil discourse. If the choice is between faith and reason, there will be no end to cultural warfare, and no limit upon the ways that warfare is prosecuted. The choice is not between faith and reason.

On the one side are ideologues who have made of secularism a functional religion, who demand that traditional religion be relentlessly expunged from the public square. On the *same* side are Christians who insist that government and public policy be based on their understanding of the biblically revealed law of God. Those two are on the same side because both pit faith against reason. On the other side are those who respect the capacity of God-given reason to engage the question of truth, including moral truth, and who are devoted to a vibrant democracy informed by the convictions of the American people, including their religious convictions. That is the choice that, it seems, becomes more apparent almost day by day.

FT

Turning the Enemy into an Enemy of the Enemy

Ever since the November election, the *New York Times* editorial page has been frothing about the end of the world, or at least the end of the political and cultural world favored by the editors. Some of the hysteria is, although pathetic, not without its entertainment value. For instance, a lead editorial titled "Starving the Poor" and aimed at the Republican congressional majority's plans for welfare reform. Rather than speak in their own voice, the editors quote extensively from a statement made a month earlier by John Cardinal O'Connor in which he sharply and rightly criticizes the stereotyping of the poor for political advantage. Among other things, the Cardinal said, "It is increasingly rare for many of us . . . to believe that people can be poor, but honest; poor, but deserving of respect. Poverty is no longer blamed on anyone but the poor themselves. Contempt for the poor has become a virtue." A touch hyperbolic perhaps, but it

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is surely a salutary caution, and a necessary reminder that a society is judged also by the way we respond to the needs of the most marginal and disadvantaged.

There is, however, something very odd about the *Times*' discovery of Cardinal O'Connor as a "compelling voice" for justice. The old axiom that the enemy of my enemy is my friend would seem to be at work here, even if the new-found friend was previously declared an enemy. During the ten years that he has been in New York, the *Times* has seldom—we were going to write "never," but maybe there was once—had a kind word for the Cardinal. It has on many occasions editorially lashed out at him and the Catholic Church for their putative bigotry and general obstructionism that got in the way of how the *Times* thinks the city and the world should be ordered. Indeed in the past decade a regularly repeated editorial theme has been the opposition of the Catholic Church in general, and Cardinal O'Connor in particular, to the course of putative progress.

But now, after November 8, 1994, the times they are a-changing. The editors write, "Given the savagery of the climate, it is useful to note what the Roman Catholic Church is saying in response. The church, through its efforts to feed and house America's poor, is intimately familiar with the problem of poverty. Of late, the church's most compelling voice has been that of the Archbishop of New York, John Cardinal O'Connor. . . ." My, my, and all this from the editors of the *Times*. They must be getting desperate. They are.

Desperate enough to trim a pastoral exhortation by the Cardinal to their own political purposes. Desperate enough to praise the Church for being "squarely on the side of the vulnerable," while excising the call for the protection of the vulnerable unborn—a call that the *Times* has routinely and stridently condemned as patriarchal indifference to the rights of women. Desperate enough to try to enlist a religious sanction for its politics, despite its thundering anathemas against the mixing of religion and politics by groups such as the Christian Coalition and its notorious editorial claim of some years ago that the Cardinal was, by criticizing policies approved by the *Times*, threatening "the fragile truce" that permits religious leaders to address questions of public moment. "Of late" the Cardinal has become a compelling voice. Of so very late. And, we can be sure, not for long.

The frothing and floundering of the *Times* in reaction to new ideas and new forces in our political culture is, as aforesaid, not without its entertainment value. In time, the editors may come to understand that the problem is not "the savagery of the climate" but the savagery of their reaction to a growing awareness that old social policies, apparently so compassionate, are cruel in their consequences for the very people they are supposed to help. The editors say that "the country has a moral obligation to feed and protect those who cannot feed and protect themselves." In time, they may come to understand that "the country" doesn't feed or protect anyone. People and institutions do these necessary things. The editors may even come to understand that the most important institutions for doing these things are not governmental but the mediating institutions, such as family, church, neighborhood, and voluntary association. They may even get to the point where they add the term "subsidiarity" to their vocabulary. But all this will likely take the editors some time.

Meanwhile, we are sure that Cardinal O'Connor knows that his involuntary recruitment as the enemy of the enemies of the *Times* is very temporary. When next he violates the orthodoxies of the *Times*, as he inevitably must, it is certain that the editors will revert to type and his "most compelling voice" will once again be the intolerably meddlesome voice of one who does not understand who is in charge of the city and the world. (*Urbi et orbi*, as Mr. Sulzberger might put it.)

FT

What Are Lawyers Good For? (This Is Not a Lawyer Joke)

So who's behind the violence surrounding abortion? The November 14, 1994 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* devotes nine quite fair and informative pages to the question. Of course the violence examined is not the killing of unborn children but the killing of two abortionists and other actions such as the torching of abortuaries. The conclusion is that, despite the efforts of Attorney General Janet Reno and the abortion lobby to discover otherwise, there is no grand conspiracy. There are a lot of opponents of abortion who feel they have reached the end of their tether and have no choice but to act outside the law and against the law. There is evidence that at least some pro-abortionists are beginning to worry that there may be something to the claim of pro-life activists that they are the nineteenth century abolitionists redevivus. With nothing but an insecure majority of the Supreme Court on their side, the pro-choice faction has reason to be nervous.

The *U.S. News* report is accompanied by a short article on another factor of increasing importance, the bringing of malpractice and other suits against abortionists and clinics. It cites Mark Crutcher of Texas who has set up a consulting firm, Life

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Dynamics. He takes out ads declaring, "If you've been physically or emotionally injured by an abortion, talk to an aggressive attorney today." When he's talking to lawyers, Crutcher says, "We want them to visualize millions of dollars, not aborted babies." Multiplying law suits doesn't do much to elevate the level of public moral discourse, but it has a certain vulgar charm, and may be effective. From various conversations it is evident that a number of pro-life leaders are intrigued by the possibilities. "Fighting fire with fire" and similarly unedifying but not uninteresting maxims crop up in such conversations.

It is noted that the infamous *Roe* decision of 1973 provides a wide open invitation to medical litigation. *Roe* said that abortion is "inherently, and primarily, a medical decision," and it follows that the abortionist must have a sound basis for "his medical judgment [that] the patient's pregnancy *should* be terminated" (emphasis added). Simply to provide abortion on request would therefore appear to be a form of negligence. Yet the clinics where the overwhelming majority of abortions are performed are almost totally unregulated, and the way they operate makes a considered medical judgment, such as that envisioned in *Roe*, virtually impossible. Physical and emotional injury are broad categories, and people are becoming more aware of the accumulating evidence that abortion contributes to, among many other things, a greatly increased chance of breast cancer. Then there is the question of whether the woman's choice was truly free and informed, or whether it was coerced by boyfriend, family, or circumstance that could be changed without great difficulty. (Even in surveys conducted by pro-choice organizations, the overwhelming majority of women who have abortions say that they "had no choice.") Such considerations should have a bearing on a doctor's decision that a woman *should* have an abortion.

Returning to the *U.S. News* article, it concludes: "These kinds of malpractice suits have put abortion-rights advocates in an uncomfortable spot. They can hardly object to a legal strategy that secures damages for injured women and makes bad doctors pay. Antiabortion groups see the obvious benefits in that strategy. Even some of their opponents concede it is one area where antiabortion forces may be gaining the upper hand." The fight for the protection of unborn children and vulnerable women is continuing, and must continue, on many fronts. The moral delegitimation of abortion within the medical community has largely been achieved. Very few doctors want to be known as abortionists, and the great majority of medical schools do not teach how to kill babies. A much magnified threat of malpractice suits could make it much more expensive for the clinics to stay in business. In addition, a greatly changed political climate after the November elections makes more than thinkable once again political and legal steps that many had despaired of.

The reader may recall President Clinton's formula that abortion should be "safe, legal, and rare." (He who then pushed policies aimed at expanding the incidence of abortion, even to the point of enshrining it as an internationally recognized human right.) Abortion has always been lethally unsafe for the baby, of course, but as it becomes more evident that it is unsafe for the mother, and as it is more widely perceived that it was illegitimately declared legal, and as litigation makes it onerously difficult to practice, it may also become much more rare. And that's one possible answer to the oft-asked question, What are lawyers good for?

FT

YEARNING FOR THE GOOD OLD DAYS

How poignant is the longing of those who came alive in the 60s, who keep searching for the return of "The Movement." One recalls Wordsworth on the enthusiasts of the French Revolution, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, But to be young was very heaven!" Robert F. Drinan, Jesuit priest and former Congressman, was not in the 60s so young in years, but it was his moment. He writes about it in a recent column. "I recently spoke to 287 people gathered in Boston to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the moratorium established in 1969 to stop the war in Vietnam." The millions then have shrunk to 287, a remnant so small as to make a precise count possible. Not 285 or 290 but 287. Drinan reflects: "The leaders and followers of the nation's leading peace groups who celebrated the silver anniversary of the moratorium are the stalwarts of organizations such as the Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Nuclear Freeze Movement, Ban the Bomb, Pax Christi, the World Federalists, SANE/Freeze, and the United Nations Association. The words of leaders like Benjamin Spock, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, and Martin Luther King, Jr. were prominent in the rhetoric of the evening."

Drinan notes that "These organizations are groping for a mandate and scrambling for funds. Their messages and their missions seem to echo another generation, a time that is gone. . . . How can they find a new (or old) movement that will articulate an appealing solution for the truly horrendous threats to peace that are emerging before our very eyes?" Those longing for The Movement Redux are frustrated by a political

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situation that does not cooperate with their hopes. Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, even Bush could boil the blood, but what can you do when your man (more or less) is in the White House? Drinan writes, "The Clinton Administration has not proposed any new foreign policy that would pose a real challenge to the American people. Unlike the time that produced the antiwar movement there are no 'good guys' and 'bad guys.' There is no one to demonize. There are few causes related to peace that make a march on Washington a mandate of conscience."

A great resource is being wasted, Fr. Drinan believes. "Religious groups possess a comprehensive and compelling series of moral principles from which a new foreign policy could be fashioned. Unfortunately there does not seem to be at this moment any movement within the mainline Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups in America to fashion a new set of guidelines for America's conduct in the world in the next several years." Many thoughtful Americans might thank God that we are delivered, at least for the moment, from the pressure of the "comprehensive and compelling" principles by which mainline religion tried to direct the nation's policies, foreign and domestic. In any event, Fr. Drinan is surely right in his suspicion that his nostalgia and that of the 287 veterans gathered in Boston seems "to echo another generation, a time that is gone."

FT

A Time Bomb, Ticking, Ticking

Soon the second anniversary of the Waco killings will be upon us. There is reason to believe that this is a very big time bomb waiting to explode under the Clinton Administration. Attorney General Janet Reno, not yet sworn in, said at the time that the incident would be thoroughly investigated but "there will be no recriminations." She was hailed as a tough and up-front lady for saying that. But what a truly odd thing to say. About eighty people—men, women, children—were shot or burned to death after seven weeks of much-publicized ineptitude by government agencies, and we were told that there will be no recriminations. The story is far from over. The official reports on the investigations by the Justice Department and its agencies have been generally dismissed by scholars who have studied them as self-serving whitewashes. A number of independent investigations are reaching completion, books are in the works, and lawsuits brought by relatives of those killed will be coming to trial. One expects there will be recriminations aplenty.

From the Ashes: Making Sense of Waco (Rowman & Littlefield, $21.95), edited by James R. Lewis, brings together forty-six essays, comments, and documents related to events in Waco. Authors range from retired Colonel Charlie Beckwith, founder of the Army's elite Delta Force, to experts on nontraditional religions such as J. Gordon Melton, to some of the country's most distinguished defenders of religious freedom such as Dean Kelley, long-time religious liberty director of the National Council of Churches. All the contributors are highly critical of the government, especially of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) and the FBI. Many note the ways in which "cult experts" and "religious deprogrammers" reinforced what appears to have been the desire of government agents to force a violent confrontation. The cumulative effect of the book is to support the conclusion that it was not David Koresh and his followers but the U.S. Government that bears moral and legal responsibility for the holocaust at Waco.

If this is true, Waco is the single most violent government assault on religious freedom in American history. One draws back from that conclusion, but then the evidence keeps forcing the mind back toward it. The questions about Waco seemed to be laid to rest, but they will now be returning in a way that the media, Congress, and the White House may find difficult to ignore. As with any event with apocalyptic connotations, the conspiracy theorists and associated vultures gather round. One cannot help but be impressed, however, by the reputations and seriousness of those who are now bringing forth evidence and arguments that make a reconsideration of Waco imperative. In thinking about this, one is haunted by a sickening possibility. What if most Americans really don't care whether or not the government killed eighty-plus men, women, and children for no other reason than that they adhered to what most people view as kooky religious beliefs?

FT

Meeting "Meaning Needs"

Readers with a grip on long-term memory will remember the name Michael Lerner. He is the editor of a liberal (okay, leftist) Jewish magazine called *Tikkun*. ("Tikkun" means healing, as in healing the world, for which a great deal is to be said.) Actually, it was not so very long ago at all that Mr. Lerner was getting, and grabbing, a lot of attention as Mrs.

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Hillary Clinton's spiritual director, so to speak. Those were the days before—well, before so many things—when Mrs. Clinton was on magazine covers as the champion of the nation's moral renewal. Within a few months of his fifteen minutes, Mr. Lerner is out with a book called *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation* (Grosset-Putnam). It is no secret that most American Jews are profoundly secular, and it therefore is no surprise that many of them feel very empty and are yearning for that great American cure-all, "spirituality." Mr. Lerner has made the happy discovery that you really don't need to choose between the secular and the spiritual; you can have it all.

He writes like this: "It does not follow that Jewish secularism must be abandoned. But secularism . . . needs to be reconstituted in ways that acknowledge the ethical, spiritual, and psychological concerns that have often been ignored or denied in the various materialist forms of secular thought. . . . Secularists need to address the ways that society systematically frustrates these meaning needs, and then to develop a 'politics of meaning' that aims to achieve societal transformations aiming to eliminate those aspects of our economic and political life that frustrate our meaning needs."

Elliott Abrams of the Hudson Institute, reviewing the book in the *American Spectator*, is not entirely taken with Mr. Lerner's proposal: "Putting aside, again, babble like 'meaning needs' and looking at the substance, Lerner is simply contradicting himself. While he seems, on page after page, to recognize man's search for the spiritual, his answer to that longing is more politics—to be precise, a 'politics of meaning' in the phrase he and Hillary made famous. Man's search for meaning cannot, he understands, be satisfied in Freudian psychology, Marxism, or science, but it is to be found in an equally secular political quest nonetheless. Judaism is, to him, a religion whose whole point is politics, and 'healing' the world turns out to be awfully close to adopting the usual environmental, economic, and sociological nostrums of the left. And Jewish renewal turns out to be little more than, well, as [Richard] Brookhiser put it, the Democratic Party with holidays. In its way, *Jewish Renewal* is, as publishers like to hear, an important book. Its suggestions to the Jewish community are precisely wrong; its remedies for the decline in that community are exactly incorrect. Lerner's own search for meaning has led him from politics, through religion, and then back again. His proposals, if adopted, would decimate the Jewish community like a plague. The effort to turn Jews into some sort of revolutionary vanguard for ecology and welfare benefits is ridiculous, and it is hard to think of anyone taking it very seriously—even Hillary Clinton."

FT

LANGUAGE GAMES

Notice how many of the disputes in contemporary Christianity are over language. Both the revisionists and their opponents are right in recognizing that words not only reflect reality but also constitute what is taken for reality. Consider a Catholic example. There is a group of priests and scholars who have launched an organization called Credo, and they have had considerable influence with the bishops and others in applying the brakes to the establishment in charge of liturgical revisions. Needless to say, those who have been accustomed to having their way do not take kindly to this interference. Credo has, for instance, issued some sharp critiques of Latin translations proposed by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). The establishment shot back that these upstarts obviously possessed little more than "high school Latin."

Father James Maroney is chairman of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, works closely with ICEL, and is advisor to the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. Recently he issued a bulletin announcing the appointment of a new bishop to the Diocese of Worcester, Mass. The traditional phrase is, "Nuntio gaudium magnum: Habemus episcopum." (I announce with great joy: We have a bishop.) Father Maroney's bulletin had it, "Annuncio vobis gaudiam magnam: Habemus episcopam!" Now truth to tell, my Latin isn't that great but something is obviously amiss here. "Annuncio" is not a Latin word. More interestingly, "episcop*am*" is feminine, as is "gaudi*am* magn*am*." The new bishop, Daniel Patrick Reilly, is definitely masculine. And in Latin "gaudium magnum" is in no way gender-specific so there is no reason to change it. (Revisionists who are big on being "inclusive" regularly impose the peculiarities of English on other languages.) Some of the priests in Credo may only have high school Latin, but one expects that most of them at least passed the course. Or perhaps Father Maroney is an accomplished Latinist and is trying to make a point. Or perhaps the changes were entirely inadvertent. As Cicero might have said, "Fors fortis" (fat chance).

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Being unecumenical can be fun. Who doesn't miss something in the bare-knuckled religious polemics of yesteryear? This writer was brought up in the

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Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod when it publicly taught that it was "the true visible church on earth." He never believed it, but it was exciting to watch one's elders contend for that proposition, especially against Catholics—it being allowed that individual Catholics could be saved by virtue of "felicitous inconsistency" between what they *really* believed and what their church taught. This is brought to mind by an item in *This Rock*, a publication of Catholic Answers in San Diego, which describes itself as a Catholic apologetics organization. It seems Catholic Answers has struck up a polemical friendship with Michael Horton, president of CURE (Christians United for Reformation). Mr. Horton is hard-core Calvinist and what he and Catholic Answers have in common, aside from the pleasure of polemics, is a strong dislike for the declaration "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" (see FT, May 1994). If that declaration is right, it might take a lot of the fun out of bashing one another. According to *This Rock*, there are "two major problems" with the declaration. It "gives the impression that Catholics and Evangelicals are *members* of the same *visible* Church of Christ." Second, "The statement implies that Catholics should not evangelize Evangelicals (or vice versa, of course)." Wrong on both scores. That Catholic Answers may *have* an impression and that they may *infer* something from the statement says something about Catholic Answers but nothing about the statement. "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" is entirely consonant with the teaching of Vatican Council II that all who are baptized are in real but imperfect communion with the Catholic Church, and it emphatically underscores the responsibility of Christians to evangelize everybody, which includes Evangelicals bearing witness to Catholics (and vice versa, of course). One is just a mite surprised that Catholic Answers seems to think that such firm and theologically astute defenders of Catholic orthodoxy as Archbishop Francis Stafford, Bishop Francis George, Fr. Avery Dulles, Professor Peter Kreeft, and John Cardinal O'Connor would sign a declaration that deviates from the Church's teaching. An organization specializing in apologetics might consider apologizing.

■ For fourteen years Richard C. Halverson served as chaplain to the U.S. Senate, and he has now resigned for reasons of health. My impression is that all who know him respect him highly. It's no little thing to maintain an effective ministry across often bitter partisan lines. Since the announcement, clergy from around the country have been sending in their resumes in the hopes of snaring a position of high prestige and, especially for clergy, high pay ($115,700). It would be more seemly were they to await the call of God, or at least of Senator Bob Dole. No doubt they simply want to make their availability known to higher powers. Mary Hunt, who directs an organization called Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual, says that after 205 years of white male chaplains it's about time for a woman. On the other hand, she thinks the job may have become obsolete. "We no longer have a country that's normatively white male or Protestant," she says. Maybe, she suggests, several chaplains are required to represent "the variety of religious traditions" in the Congress. We have a quota system for most everything else, so why not for the spiritual care of Senators? Actually, while we don't have the religious breakdown for the new Senate, the last one had eighty-three Senators who identified themselves as Christians, ten as Jews, and seven who didn't say. The largest single group, of course, was twenty-three Catholics, most of whom, unfortunately, were not conspicuously Catholic on questions that should be of particular concern to Catholics. God does not need and Senator Dole would not likely take our advice on what should be done about the chaplaincy, which is just as well since we don't have any particular wisdom on the subject. Except for this: The tradition of a Senate chaplain should be maintained. To have no chaplain would be perceived as a further secularization of the public square; to have several would be pandering to a false "pluralism" that undermines commonalities in our public life. And except for this: The new chaplain should study very carefully the way that Richard Halverson did it so very well.

■ Quite a debate has been kicked off by the National History Standards Project, which employed focus groups and other "consensus building procedures" to come up with a new way for schools to tell the American story. Despite all the references to consultative proceduralism, the new curriculum is pretty much what one would expect from the biases of experts who are, yes, politically correct, indeed painfully so. The historians who came up with these guidelines say that they have eschewed "the great man theory of history" (especially great dead white men), and want to nurture a multicultural appreciation of human diversity. Among those who are not buying is John Patrick Diggins, Professor of History at the City University of New York. He observes that "The 60's generation may have lost most of its political battles but, now safely ensconced in academia, it has won the war for cultural hegemony." Those who produced these standards defend their work by saying that historical revisionism reflects the critical mind at work. Diggins worries that this kind of revisionism will actually end up stifling the critical mind. "[T]he historians who wrote the standards may with the best of intentions be imposing their own interpretations and values to the point that students will not be able to do what they are purportedly called upon to do. Students are asked to exercise 'independent judgment,' yet it has already been

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decided that they should not spend an excessive amount of time studying 'great civilizations.' They are told to 'detect bias,' yet any detection—for example, questioning a text for emphasizing the achievements of one culture over another—runs the risk of being dubbed racist. They are to 'weigh evidence and to evaluate arguments,' yet they dare not pronounce the Federalist Papers superior in political wisdom lest they commit the elitist mistakes of the past. They are advised to 'sniff out spurious appeals to history,' yet they should beware of studying the 'great men,' the very thinkers who were in the vanguard of inquiry. Some standards." One recalls again Dryden's observation about false freedoms that impose real bonds.

■ Nobody reads it anyway, a friend tells me, so what difference does it make? Maybe so, and maybe it's a small thing, but it should not go entirely unremarked. I can't be the only one who reads the annual presidential proclamations for Thanksgiving Day. This time President Clinton urged us "to lift ourselves closer to God's grace," noting that "ours is an unfinished journey." As to where we are going as a nation, he had this to say, "Our destination must be to create the means for every one of us to prosper, to enjoy sound education, meaningful work experience, protective health care, and personal security." The language gives a lift to the soul. The Lincolnesque ring of "meaningful work experience" puts one in mind of the first President to issue a proclamation declaring Thanksgiving a national holy day. President Clinton's proclamation concludes by urging "the citizens of this great nation to continue this beloved tradition." The 1994 proclamation breaks tradition, however, by not being dated. Past proclamations ended by noting that the document was given in a certain year of the founding of these United States of America and in a certain "year of Our Lord." That the 1994 proclamation is not dated at all may reflect simply an absence of historical consciousness. But whoever wrote it must have gone back to consult earlier proclamations, and the omission of the traditional conclusion must, one is inclined to think, have been deliberate. The "year of Our Lord" likely offended somebody's sense of what is appropriate in this "pluralistic" society. What about the Muslims, the Californicating New Agers, the Buddhists, the Confucianists, and the ACLUists? All might be "offended," as it is offensively said. To a certain mindset, pluralism is the enemy of particularity, requiring a denial of, or indifference toward, the differences that make most difference. The result is a dispiriting mix of the banal and mendacious. Authentic pluralism, of course, is the engagement of, even the celebration of, difference within the bonds of civility. But, as my friend says, we should not make too much of a Thanksgiving Day proclamation that almost nobody reads anyway. On the other hand, it's my job to bring such things to public attention. I don't know if that task is a "meaningful work experience," but I can thankfully say that it's not without its satisfactions.

■ In Seattle, following the November elections, the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials gathered. There were "about sixty of them," according to a long story in the *New York Times* which noted that these annual meetings of openly gay public officials started in 1985. A main subject of conversation this year was "what seems to be a national phenomenon: the preoccupation of the press with their homosexuality." Please consider. They convene as the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials, they invite the press, they highlight the growing number of openly gay and lesbian public officials, they reiterate the demand that the press pay more attention to their issues—and they complain about "the preoccupation of the press with their homosexuality." It takes a lot of doing for this scribe to work up even a smidgen of sympathy for the view that the press is getting a bum rap, but every once in a while . . .

■ We Americans supply great entertainment for our British cousins. They sometimes take a condescending attitude toward us, which is almost always unwarranted, but we should understand that it is not easy living in a country where the end of history is not an interesting theory but the very air you breathe. At other times they discern things about us with remarkable clarity. This, for instance, from the *Spectator*'s editorial ruminations on our recent election: "But the role played by the mainstream media was a curious one, without precedent in America, and without a real British analogy. Only last week, *Time* magazine put a photograph of Newt Gingrich, the Republican who will now be Speaker of the House of Representatives, on its cover: Mr. Gingrich's features were twisted into a snarl, beneath the headline, 'The Politics of Hate'; who hates whom was, not, however, very clear. Others—television, and broadsheet newspapers—continued to report the elections from a biased and thoroughly partisan perspective, yet all the while maintaining a pretense of objectivity and an attitude of pure scorn for anyone who pointed this out: this hypocrisy is the trademark of the politically correct American press. Meanwhile, scrappy local radio talk-shows were promoting candidates like Mr. Gingrich and Mr. North. The difference between the two types of media made the ideological gap between Republicans and Democrats seem even larger: never before have American elites—in media, law, and government—seemed so out of touch with the American people." We should not begrudge the editors' finding this small consolation in the comparison of our media and theirs: "Despite that growing substitution of gossip for the reporting of

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genuine issues, and the apparently endless demand for sex and scandal, British mainstream press and television are, in this sense, far healthier than their American counterparts: at least it is still possible to find more than one set of biases and prejudices in the broadsheet press—and at least no one tries to pretend that they do not exist at all."

■ Ms. Kate Michelman, one of the country's foremost proponents of abortion, described the November election results as "devastating and disastrous." And with good reason. Pro-life leaders are counting at least forty-five gains in the House and six in the Senate. The actual gains may be more than that, since the election decisively demonstrated that the pro-life position is no electoral handicap and could well be an advantage. That will likely not be lost on incumbent politicians who have been waffling up to now. Of the thirty-six House Democratic incumbents who lost, thirty-four were pro-abortion, and twenty-nine of them were defeated by pro-lifers. Also noteworthy, there is now a bloc of seven strongly and articulately pro-life women in the House. "It's exciting stuff to have these women to argue the pro-life position when Pat Schroeder starts pontificating," says Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council. Opposing abortion, says GOP consultant Jeffrey Bell, "wasn't the big albatross the other side said it was. It never is. That's the big myth. Abortion is the issue that just won't quit." According to a Wirthlin poll, 27 percent of those who voted said that abortion influenced their vote. Of that 27 percent, 9 percent were pro-choice and 18 percent pro-life. That's a two-to-one margin. Also with respect to abortion, we are suddenly in a quite different political culture. Some conservative Republicans (the other kind of Republican is now an endangered species) say they want to put off major action on abortion for a while, using the next Congress to "educate the public" on the question through hearings and other initiatives. There may be strategic sense in that. At the same time, many politically activated pro-lifers are impatient and may quickly smell betrayal if there is not visible movement by an early date. In addition, it now seems quite clear that if the Republican party nominates a presidential candidate who is not credibly pro-life, it is inviting massive defections, third party right-to-life candidates in nearly every state, and almost certain defeat. It is with a sense of wonder that one remembers how, on January 23, 1973, all the print and broadcast media informed the world that the Supreme Court had "settled" the abortion question.

■ When in October President Clinton escaped campaign pressures here to participate in Jordanian-Israeli peace ceremonies, he was accompanied by Father Leo J. O'Donovan, president of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Writing in *America,* Fr. O'Donovan gives a glowing account of what must have been for him an inspiring trip. President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher spoke "movingly" on a number of very important themes—"supporting the process toward a comprehensive peace, expressing solidarity with Jews and Arabs in the journey, denouncing terrorism, promoting economic development." Not only that, but these themes "were echoed in remarks Hillary Rodham Clinton made at several appearances." In Amman, Jordan, President Clinton was "eloquent" in affirming "American solidarity with the peace signatories." Fr. O'Donovan concludes, "It would not have happened without American participation. Nor without our President." One would not be surprised if Fr. O'Donovan gets invited to go on other presidential trips.

■ Still the most celebrated dissident theologian of the post-Vatican II era, Father Hans Küng was recently invited to lecture at Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Never a man to pander to his audience, Fr. Küng came right out and told the Anglicans that the main responsibility for ecumenical difficulties between Canterbury and Rome "certainly lies with Rome." He added, "I say that with the sorrow of a Catholic theologian who all his theological life has been committed to the ecumenical cause." Over the last thirty years, Fr. Küng has become well-known for the sorrowful reluctance with which he says anything critical of Rome. In his lecture, according to the *Tablet,* he noted that the "Anglican tradition" poses hard questions to the "Roman system." "Why shouldn't it be possible for Roman Catholic dioceses too to make an independent election of their own bishops?" "Why shouldn't . . . the 'women's question' (above all, ordination) be resolved in one country earlier than another?" "Why shouldn't a church be able to have eucharistic communion [with another church] in its country if it regards the differences as settled?" And so forth. It all comes down to one hard question that Fr. Küng says Anglicanism puts to Rome: Why doesn't Rome become like the Church of England? Many Anglicans will agree with Catholics that that question has an embarrassingly easy answer. Nonetheless, one would not be surprised if Fr. Küng gets invited to speak at other functions sponsored by the C of E.

■ The CBS program *60 Minutes* filmed the very leftist "Call to Action" gathering in Chicago for a segment that will look at "the state of the Catholic Church in the U.S. today." Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister presided at the main Mass, along with a deacon and his wife, a resigned priest, and a member of Dignity, the Catholic gay and lesbian group. "We don't need permission to be the church," said Chittister. Apparently it was an enthusiastic crowd. At the sharing of the peace, reporter Mike Wallace

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was standing near the altar and, it says here, "seemed momentarily stunned as he was greeted with a barrage of hugs and handshakes." One can sympathize even with a man who is a pro at momentarily stunning others. Sister Joan said that in the 60s these meetings posed the question, What will you do now? "The value of such things in the 90s is, What will you think now?" Maybe they should change the name from "Call to Action" to "Call to Thinking," but that would likely spoil the fun. Feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether was a featured speaker, as she has been every year as long as the old-timers can remember. She spoke about the frustration sometimes experienced in trying to "stay committed to reform of the church." But she can still get herself worked up. For instance, a Church of England clergyman told her he determined to become Catholic after his church decided to ordain women. Ruether: "And I thought, 'Oh no, no, not here, not here do you try to reproduce a haven from women and from cultural and class diversity as you seek a cozy home for English males who want to hear the liturgy intoned in an Oxbridge accent. Be advised that if you join the Catholic Church you will encounter yet stronger feminists. But also you will be discomfited to sit in the pew with working-class Irish.' I always think of those guys at Cambridge and Oxford with their dainty ways having to sit in an ordinary working-class parish." Dear, dear, does one detect a note of homophobia, not to mention Anglophobia? According to this report, "The three days of workshops included a strong track on building small faith communities as well as sessions on combating racism, organizing against violence, African-American spirituality, and lesbian/gay spirituality and theology." A total of 3,100 attended the Chicago "Call to Action." Nine percent were priests. It doesn't say how many of them were retired. Perhaps the more telling figure is that 10 percent of the participants were under thirty years of age and 50 percent were over fifty. If the *60 Minutes* program suggests that "Call to Action" reflects the state of the Catholic Church in the U.S. today, we will know that Mike Wallace was more than momentarily stunned.

■ "I can't get enough of Mary Ann Glendon," writes a reader from Pennsylvania, and she's certainly not alone. Glendon fans will be interested in a series of four 30-minute tapes the Harvard law professor has done on the future of the pro-life movement, Catholic feminism, the Church and higher education, and what it means to be both Catholic and American. For information, write Alba House, P.O. Box 595, Canfield, OH 44406.

■ There is a potentially useful discussion building over a lawsuit filed by Lynne C. Boughton against DePaul University in Chicago. She is charging that she was denied an interview for a tenure-track position in the religious studies department and finally discharged because her views were "too Catholic." The question is one of illegal religious discrimination. According to one paper, "Boughton said that although she refrained from interjecting her traditional Catholic beliefs into her teaching, the university 'persecuted her solely because of her religious beliefs.'" Why a religion teacher in a putatively Catholic university should feel obliged to refrain from injecting her beliefs in her teaching may strike some as curious. (DePaul is run by the Vincentian order.) The newspaper of St. Louis University, a Jesuit institution, reflects on whether that school has a similar problem. One faculty defender of St. Louis U says, "I believe that the University is committed to Jesuit Catholic values, while encouraging religious diversity," and so forth. Another, however, thinks the school is misleading people by presenting itself as a "Catholic Jesuit community." Jesuit Catholic? Catholic Jesuit? Does the adjective control the noun, or vice versa? And remember when people simply assumed that Jesuits were Catholic?

■ We almost got away with it. But now Texe Marrs, who runs Living Truth Ministries in Austin, Texas, has told his thousands of readers the real story behind "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." It seems that Charles Colson is a "closet Catholic" who was recruited by the Vatican to arrange for Protestantism's surrender to Rome. Neuhaus is a "Marxist heretic" who answers to "both the notorious *Catholic Order of the Jesuits* and the infamous Christian-bashing, *Jewish Anti-Defamation League*." "When Rev. Neuhaus abandoned the Lutheran Church to become a Catholic priest, the Vatican and its Jesuits knew they had a potential winner. With Rome's guidance (and financial means!), they reasoned, Richard Neuhaus could be used to manipulate millions of gullible Christians into joining in a grand crusade to destroy Protestantism." In light of Marrs' revelations, we can see how sneaky Neuhaus has been in covering his tracks by pretending on occasion to be critical of the Jesuits and the Anti-Defamation League. "Colson and Neuhaus openly admit that they secretly worked for two years behind the scenes on this project. Their plan was to get the world's top evangelical and Catholic leaders to sign up and endorse the manifesto before expected opposition developed." (In retrospect, it was probably a mistake for Chuck and me to admit it publicly.) Those who want to know more can get *All Fall Down*, a special report by Mr. Marrs that reveals "the stunning facts about the greatest sell-out in the history of Christianity." It seems that Protestants have been recruited to work with Jews and Jesuits to bring "the whole religious establishment, under their supreme leader, the Pope, straight into the Great Apostasy." In addition to the

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real dirt on Colson and Neuhaus, the report "unmasks the Vatican connections" of some of the biggest names in Protestantism, including Pat Robertson, Billy Graham, Bill Bright, Robert Schuller, Richard Land, and Larry Lewis. Oh yes, Marrs reveals that Neuhaus also publishes "a propagandistic magazine, *Things Considered.*" Don't say you were not warned.

■ No, allegations to the contrary, I do not even try to read everything. But I sometimes wonder why I continue to look, at least from time to time, at some publications. For instance, the foundering flagscow of the Catholic left, the *National Catholic Reporter.* For the sake of amusement, more often than not, just to see what the inmates are saying about their occasional encounters with the outside world. Here is a recent headline: "New Cardinals: John Paul II creates 30 new ones—all men—from 24 countries." So you can see the benefit of reading *NCR.* What other paper would be so alert as to point out that there were no women cardinals appointed this time around? In the same issue there is a long story by Peter Hebblethwaite, the prolific and ever excited purveyor of inside dope on Vatican conspiracies, under the heading, "Pope Stacks School of Cardinals." It seems the Pope, being an unspeakably rigid fellow, did not make cardinals of the declared enemies of this pontificate. Nor did it escape the attention of Mr. Hebblethwaite that the Pope appointed "anti-communist" cardinals in Vietnam and Cuba. But then, what would you expect from a reactionary like John Paul II? To be fair to *NCR,* it is not all that much more amusing on these questions than the *New York Times,* especially since Allan Cowell was made its Rome correspondent. Mr. Cowell, who has scaled new heights of the obtusely banal, reported that, with the appointment of new cardinals, the Pope was "solidifying his base" in the Church. Mr. Cowell, it seems, is getting himself ready to cover Karol Wojtyla's reelection campaign in 1996. Perhaps it is too much to expect from the *Times,* but from Catholic publications, no matter how tenuously Catholic, one would hope for some capacity to view the Church in terms other than those of secular power politics. But while I'm allowing fairness to get the better of me, I should report some surprises in the way people have been responding to the Pope's best-selling book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope.* The editor of the *Tablet* (London) asked a bunch of his regulars—most of whom are skeptical-to-hostile toward anything issuing from the Holy See—to comment on the book and the reviews were, with exceptions, glowing. Similarly, *NCR* printed a comment by Father F. X. Murphy (the famed "Xavier Rynne" who reported on Vatican II for the *New Yorker*) in which he compared *Threshold* favorably with St. Augustine's *Confessions.* To be sure, the same issue carried an extended trashing of the book by the above-mentioned Hebblethwaite, and the editors printed Murphy's much shorter comment on the last page and under the heading, "Another View." But enough to make the point. You can see why there is a modestly amusing payoff to looking at publications such as *NCR,* from time to time.

■ Days after writing the above, word comes that Peter Hebblethwaite has died in Oxford at age sixty-four. A generous obituary in the *New York Times* (which has him as the Vatican correspondent for the *National Catholic Register* rather than the *National Catholic Reporter*) says Hebblethwaite "gained high esteem as an author whose style was calm, scholarly, and even witty." In accord with the maxim *De mortuis nil nisi bonum,* it should be allowed that Hebblethwaite was sometimes witty. In something of an understatement, the *Times* notes that "Mr. Hebblethwaite thought little of John Paul II, and did not conceal his hope that his successor would reverse what he considered the Vatican's reactionary attitudes." His final book, *The Next Pope,* will appear later this year and offers Mr. Hebblethwaite's views on who is, and who is not, likely to lead the Church in the directions that he favored. As a Jesuit priest, Hebblethwaite attended the last sessions of Vatican Council II, and then edited the Jesuit magazine, *The Month,* for several years before deciding that "the spirit of the Council" had been betrayed. He quit the priesthood in 1974 and married author Margaret Speaight, who is also Deputy Editor of the *Tablet* (London), where Hebblethwaite regularly appeared. Of his books, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope* will probably be of lasting interest. In that biography, he takes a rather favorable view of Paul VI, in repeated and explicit contrast to John Paul II. However wrongheaded one may think his views, there can be no doubt of Hebblethwaite's devotion to the Church as he understood it. Almost nothing has turned out as Peter Hebblethwaite thought it should have. In the pontificate of John Paul II, the renewal called for by Vatican II has been construed in strong continuity with the Church's tradition and, at the time of Hebblethwaite's death, it was perhaps evident also to him that the pontificate itself is vibrantly alive and assertive as this Pope intends to lead the Church across the threshold of the Third Millennium. A heavyset, chain-smoking, indomitable personality and prolific writer, Peter Hebblethwaite got the big story almost entirely wrong, in our view, but in the day by day telling of it he frequently provided an angle of vision that forced others to think more clearly and a contrariness graced by the joy of battle. The preparation of journalists for heaven is probably a prolonged affair, but we will not be surprised if, in due course, celestial delights include reading Peter Hebblethwaite's inside stories on what the angels are saying around the Throne. At that point, the big

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story will no longer be in dispute, which will improve immeasurably his analysis, and ours.

■ A St. Louis reader notes that the prosecutor in the Paul Hill trial sought the death penalty while the prosecutor in the O. J. Simpson case did not. She has this question, "What would happen if O. J. Simpson had killed an abortionist?" We're thinking about it.

■ And now for something completely different. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, there is a "national resurgence of the Christian left." Staff writer Martha Sawyer Allen declares that there is "a trend in Minnesota, which mirrors a strong national trend: Christian liberals and moderates are talking openly about morality and values from their perspective." One might wonder from whose perspective they've been talking all these years. Be that as it may, we are told that liberal Christians are "seeking ways to promote their own agendas and recapture the discussions of values from Christian conservatives." The evidence for this great resurgence is threefold. ELCA Lutherans in Minnesota are holding a conference "to celebrate their Lutheran heritage and re-energize their social action agenda." An organizer says that conservative "grouchies" will not be welcome. "By the 'grouchies,' Joanne Negstad doesn't mean those who disagree with her, but those who dominate a debate in negative, blaming, or judgmental ways. 'We know that not everybody who comes will be in the same place on their own faith journey,' she said, 'but we want to develop a graceful spirit of acceptance and listening.'" In other words, the debate will be dominated in accepting and inclusive ways. The second piece of evidence for this national resurgence of the Christian left: "Last month, Roman Catholics brought in Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, a well-known Catholic liberal and outspoken advocate of gay rights." And a lot of people showed up. Then there is exhibit number three: Christian feminists met in Minneapolis "to celebrate the first anniversary of the RE-Imagining conference, the controversial meeting that celebrated feminine God images." The story doesn't say how many people showed up for that, but readers will remember that the reaction to the RE-Imagining conference of 1993, largely sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (USA), cost several mainline churches huge bureaucratic headaches and millions of dollars in contributions. Of such is "the national resurgence of the Christian left." Ralph Reed, call your office, they're still twitching in Minneapolis.

■ It's a standard rhetorical ploy for conservatives opposing a new government program to ask whether you want the people who run the post office to be in charge of (whatever the new program is about). One might think the U.S. Postal Service would be eager to improve its public image, but nothing of the sort. A month before Christmas, it announced that in 1995 it will not issue the very popular Christmas stamp of the Virgin and Child. 1995 stamps, the Postmaster General said, will include one portraying a "Victorian-era angel" and others featuring Santa Claus and children with holiday gifts. In response to protests, a post office spokesman said the replacement angel stamp "conveys to all the full significance and meaning of the season." The protests continued to build, there were rumblings from Congress and the White House, and the Postmaster General decided that they will continue the Madonna and Child stamp after all. But new rules published in the *USPS Postal Bulletin* bar "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Hanukkah" signs in local post offices. The bulletin says the post office "must avoid the appearance of favoring any particular religion or religion itself." A display for the religious festival of Kwanzaa, observed by some American blacks, is permitted, the bulletin notes. Oh yes, postal workers will be permitted to convey season's greetings orally, so it's not as though anyone's private exercise of religious freedom is being limited. Citizens can write the U.S. Postal Service to offer their views on these goings on, but, given the sorry state of mail delivery, there might not be much point in it.

■ For several years a battle has been sputtering, and sometimes flaming, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) over, of all things, the ministerial pension fund. The ELCA had decided it would join many other institutions in disinvesting from anything in South Africa, and use pension money to pressure corporations in various directions favored by church leaders. Pastor Tom Basich of Roseville, Minn., really did not like the idea that the church was using *his* pension money to advance what he viewed as a host of ideologically driven causes. Basich's idea was and is that the pension fund should make investment decisions to his benefit, and he would decide on his own what political projects to support or not support. At first Pastor Basich and a handful of allies were viewed as eccentrics, but they stuck by their position and it was not long before the ELCA knew it had a fight on its hands. The whole affair is written up in the December 1994 issue of *Smart Money*, a magazine published by the *Wall Street Journal*, and those who are interested in the potent mix of religion, money, and politics (sorry, no sex) might want to get their hands on a copy.

■ It is true that we have from time to time indicated a less than unqualified admiration for the *New York Times*. But something funny is afoot, and, if it continues, we may have to reconsider our attitude toward the sleazy old lady of American journalism. Within three weeks of last November's election, the *Times* ran three remarkable stories detailing, indeed celebrating, the work of the Catholic Church with

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and for the poor. There was one on November 24 on Fr. Benedict Groeschel and his Franciscan brethren who have for years run a big food and housing network in the Bronx. Then a report on school vouchers in New Jersey and how everyone now agrees that the Catholic schools in the inner cities are the educational gold standard and the best hope for black and Hispanic youngsters. Then, on Sunday, November 27, a compelling "Diary of an Urban Priest" that went on for pages, being the day-by-day notes of Fr. John Flynn of St. Martin du Tours Church in a particularly embattled section of the Bronx. As if that were not enough, the November 25 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* had this glowing front-page story on "Father Beans" (Lawrence Bohnen) who for forty years in Haiti has been feeding the poor and, as important, instilling the habits of work and self-reliance in the slums of Port-Au-Prince and other cities. (Note: The *Journal*'s news section, as distinct from the editorial section, is usually just about as dizzy as the *Times*, although not, to be sure, as dizzy as the *Times*' editorial and op-ed pages.) So what is one to make of this sudden rush of media sanity? First, we hope it continues, and that they'll include some heroic things being done also by Protestants working among the poor. Second, that maybe a few editors have been awakened to the fact that serious one-to-one work with people in need is almost never done by the government and is typically done by parties who have a commitment grounded in religious conviction. (The election's evidence of Americans' robust skepticism toward government programs may have had something to do with that awakening, if an awakening there be.) Third, this spurt of attention to real people doing something real for the poor may be no more than a coincidence. Of course we hope that is not the case. In any event, you can now hold off on those letters complaining that we never have anything positive to say about the press.

■ Ten fellowships are available for Americans wanting to participate in the three-week seminar on "The Free Society and Centesimus Annus" next July 3 through 22 in Krakow, Poland. The faculty includes Michael Novak, George Weigel, Russell Hittinger, Fr. Maciej Zieba, and this writer. Fellows must be graduate students or upcoming college seniors, and the application deadline is April 1. Fellowships cover tuition, lodging, meals, and excursions. Send c.v., writing sample, and 300 word essay on liberty to Brian Anderson, American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Or call Mr. Anderson at (202) 862-7152.

■ We end on the note of a happy beginning. With this issue, Joseph Bottum (known to readers as J. Bottum and called Jody by his friends) comes on staff as Associate Editor. A native of South Dakota, Jody did his undergraduate work at Georgetown and in December 1993 received his Ph.D. from Boston College. He has taught at the University of Lowell in Massachusetts and at Loyola College, Baltimore. His field is philosophy, with a particular interest in medieval philosophy, and those who read his "Christians and Postmoderns" (April 1994) know that he is no slouch when it comes to addressing contemporary thought, and thoughtlessness (see also his "A Suspicion of Snobbery" in this issue). Jody and his wife Lorena are Roman Catholic and will be living in New York City. The editorial position was opened up by the retirement of Midge Decter, who since 1991 has been Distinguished Fellow of the Institute and an invaluable aid in the editing of the journal. It would be false to say that Mr. Bottum is replacing Midge Decter, for nobody could do that. But we are confidently expecting great things from him. This is also an appropriate occasion to mention that Ms. Decter will be delivering the Institute's annual Erasmus Lecture on Thursday, April 27, at the Union League Club in New York. Her theme is "A Jew in Anti-Christian America," and tickets are available by writing this office. Finally, when we advertised the availability of an editorial post, we were swamped with applications, many from people who were extraordinarily well qualified, most of them younger people, and all of them great fans of the journal. We very much wished we were in a position to hire at least ten of them. It was a tough choice, but we are grateful to have J. Bottum with us, and you can be sure that you will be hearing more from him both in his own voice and in his editorial honing of the voices of others.

Sources: Martin Walker review of *Resurrection* and *Strange Justice* in *New York Times Book Review*, November 20, 1994. *New York Times* editorial "Starving the Poor," November 24, 1994. Father Drinan on the 1960s, *National Catholic Reporter*, November 18, 1994. Elliott Abrams review of Michael Lerner in *American Spectator*, December 1994.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: On National History Standards Project, *New York Times*, November 19, 1994. On the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials, *New York Times*, November 23, 1994. British analysis of American politics, *Spectator*, November 12, 1994. Quotes on elections and abortion, Fred Barnes, *New Republic*, December 5, 1994. Fr. O'Donovan on Jordanian-Israeli peace ceremonies, *America*, November 19, 1994. Hans Küng quoted in the *Tablet*, November 12, 1994. On *60 Minutes* filming of "Call to Action," *National Catholic Reporter*, November 18, 1994. On Catholic universities discriminating against Catholic faculty, *University News* of St. Louis University, October 28, 1994. Texe Marrs on Richard John Neuhaus in *Flashpoint*, November 1994. On Peter Hebblethwaite, *New York Times*, December 20, 1994. On morality and values among Christian liberals, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 14, 1994. On Christmas stamp of the Virgin and Child, *National and International Religion Report*, November 28, 1994.

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Jacob's Ladder

Suggesting that I get the shotgun
to shoot down Grandmother's ideals,
Grandfather told me how his father
demonstrated that women were fools—
why, if he dangled his foot out the window
for ten minutes, he'd have a woman
like a ring circling every toe.

Grandfather's cynicism reflected in his limp,
his hip displaced in a branding accident
years before—fitting, he said,
for this world of spawning-ditch and boneyard.
I'd seem him cry twice, first at my wedding—
he caught a cold, he said—
nothing about the course of married love
could make him tearful—
and again at my grandmother's funeral:
guarding himself like a watchdog,
he muttered, "Poor Mom,
someday we'll be together again."

No one expected Grandmother
to leave first:
like the wheat,
she would show fresh,
green shoots each fall.
Every winter Grandfather said that
he wouldn't see the violets that
would in spring put up their heads.
Her nerves reacting,
Grandmother increased her pace,
her hands ever-flying.

After her death from cancer
that rooted in the thigh,
I dreamed a rolling field
where Grandmother—her hair waves of gold again,
her eyes shining as Colorado sky—
sat, laughing quietly.
"I guess I'll have to learn
to get things right," she said,
her hands at last sparrows
that had come to roost,
her warmth the fragrance
of fresh-baked bread.

Thomas Ramey Watson

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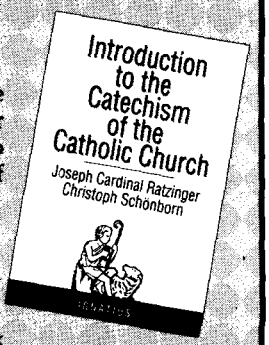

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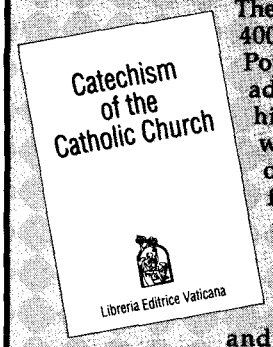

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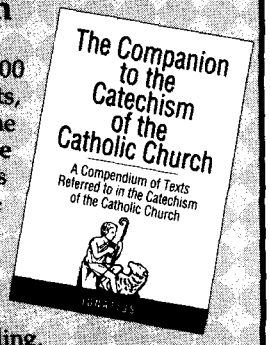
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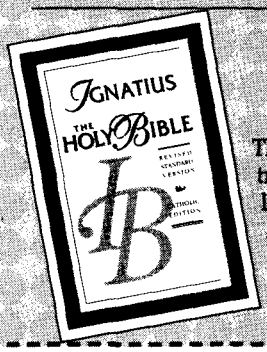

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